## Who We Are

Winnipeg City Council created the Access Advisory Committee (AAC) in 1989 to advise civic government on making the City of Winnipeg's information, properties and services accessible for persons with disabilities to the benefit of all citizens.



*The City Hall Administration & Council Buildings have hands-free automatic door openers. Universal Design works for everyone!*

With subtle changes to improve communication, service delivery and properties, more people can comfortably access civic resources. A person's age, height, size, strengths and abilities can impact accessibility.

The AAC is a bridge between City Council, civic administration and the community. We advise the civic structure about community needs and positive changes to consider implementing to improve the access of civic government and resources. We also monitor the progress of accessibility concerns.

Thirteen volunteers with an interest in creating a "pro-access" environment – including representatives from the civic and provincial governments – meet monthly. There are three AAC subcommittees: Management, Communication/Education, and Policy and Procedure.

Our regular communication with individuals and community organizations helps keep us up to date with what's new and how technology, products and services can improve accessibility. We liaise with other Canadian cities about what they are doing to create universal access.

## AAC Members

*Chair* - Councillor Jenny Gerbasi

*Ex-officio* - Mayor Glen Murray

*Vice Chair* - Doug Strong

*Alternate* - Councillor Gord Steeves

*Provincial Representatives* - Jim Derksen
- Brenda Hollier

Committee Administration

Judy Redmond

Jennifer Ridge

Committee Members

Diane Caley
Rose Ann MacKinnon
Tim McIsaac
Colin Mathieson
Susan Morrow
Sandy Popham
Jane Sayer
Tanis Woodland
Yhetta Gold

Past Committee Members

Robert Bruce Beatson
Theresa Anne Swedick

CAO Secretariat Advisor

James Allum

## Financial Report 2002

*Revenues:*

Council Funding ..... $69,000

*Expenditures*

- Meeting Costs (operating) ..... $ 4,100
- Meeting Costs (facilitating) ..... $ 200
- Education ..... $13,950
- Administrative Support ..... $40,000
- Office Supplies ..... $ 7,850
- Research and Development ..... $ 2,900

Total ..... $69,000

## What We've Done

It's been a busy year with exciting advancements toward civic resources everyone can access. Here are the AAC's Top Ten Activities for 2002:

1. Promoting Universal Design through presentations to groups within the civic structure and communities locally, nationally and internationally.
2. Contributing to the Universal Design Implementation Team by mentoring seconded staff responsible for assisting the team in writing the Universal Design Implementation report and organizing educational sessions regarding Universal Design.
3. Teaming up with SMD Abitech in a proposal to create a Universal Design Policy development tool for municipalities.
4. Establishing new connections with individuals, community organizations, and businesses. Continuing to foster strong links with City Council, the Civic Administration, the provincial government and the community. We reinforced our network with our contribution to planning and presenting the Winnipeg Business Accessibility Awards.



*New City of Winnipeg buses provide comfortable Easy Access for everyone.*

5. Working closely with the City Clerk's Department to make civic election venues, materials and services accessible to the community. Accessibility features include: templates for people who are blind, better signage and enhanced communications.
6. Collaborating with Public Works Department to prepare a proposal for an Accessibility Program (AP). Council approved the AP, which will address accessibility issues identified in the 1998 Centre Plan Accessibility Audit (prepared for the AAC by the Universal Design Institute at the University of Manitoba). Funding for this program is currently in Councils' budget review process.
7. Liaising with a number of City of Winnipeg departments to provide suggestions for: the Moray Extension, Kingsbury sidewalk renewal, Waterfront Drive, Water and Westbrook construction, the Provencher Bridge walkway system and pedestrian access to the CARRAC docks.
8. At the request of Public Works Department provide active consultation on renovation projects and the review of the Standard Construction Specifications, with respect to universal design.
9. View conceptual drawings and remark on universal access for the Millennium Library Project, True North project and the City Hall courtyard.
10. Participating in a strategic planning session to establish an AAC action plan for 2003 and long-term goals.

## Out and About

We've participated in events to increase awareness, attended workshops and conferences and shared what we know about accessibility.

This year, the AAC was at the:

- Great Canadian Stationary Bike Race for the Cerebral Palsy Association
- Obstacle Race for the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities
- "Inclusive Cities" workshop, hosted by the Laidlaw Foundation and Health Canada. This workshop explored ways Canadian Municipalities could be more aware of ethnic and ability diversity in their communities.
- *Manitoba Employment Access Awareness* planning committee.
- "*Reforming Social Services and Social Policy Change*" conference held in sister city L'viv, Ukraine. Committee Coordinator Judy Redmond contributed to several panel discussions and presented on our Universal Design Policy, Sign Language Interpreter Policy and the Winnipeg Business Accessibility Awards.

## Where We're Heading

Civic resources are more accessible than ever, but there's still work to do. For the year 2003, we plan to:

- implement a multi-stage communication strategy to increase our profile and community awareness regarding universal design and accessibility.
- discuss launching a newsletter and/or email update to let our contacts know what we're doing.
- incorporate pro-access messages into every announcement we make.
- build a database with contacts that we have made.
- continue making recommendations to Civic Administration about curb cuts, the parking permit program and audible traffic signals.
- examine the possibility of closed captioning council meetings and other city broadcasts.
- research new technologies and communication strategies utilized by emergency response teams in other cities to further develop a plan for the City of Winnipeg.

## Did You Know?

Improvements have been made to the AAC website (www.aacwinnipeg.mb.ca) to enhance accessibility.

The City of Winnipeg website (www.winnipeg.ca) has been overhauled to reflect the universal design policy.

Winnipeg City Council unanimously approved the first Universal Design Policy in Canada on December 12, 2001.

The AAC helped celebrate advancements and accomplishments in accessible design by businesses with the presentation of the first *Winnipeg Business Accessibility Award* in June 2002.

Persons who are deaf can access civic services with TTY and can arrange for American Sign Language Interpreters, thanks to a *Sign Language Interpreter Policy* (adopted February 2001).

The City of Winnipeg council building and chambers will have improved universal access.

The AAC received two awards for the City of Winnipeg's leading role in creating a Universal Design Policy.

The AAC advises City Council on encroachment issues. Encroachment is when a door, sign or café extends into a public sidewalk.

## Hats Off!

Our exciting year of progress wouldn't have been possible without the commitment of Mayor Glen Murray, City Council and the Civic Administration. We're grateful for the way these key players have embraced the philosophy of Universal Design and the action taken to create a pro-access environment.

***This report is available in Braille or on disc.***

We appreciate the support and recognition from Tim Sale, Former Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities. We value our partnership with provincial representatives and welcome the presence of Drew Caldwell, recently appointed Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities.

The Committee's ability to move forward on accessibility is enhanced through our relationships with individuals and organizations dedicated to universal access. Thank you for your input and your efforts.



## People are Talking

"I recently got wind of the great stuff happening out your way regarding adoption of the UD policy! Fantastic stuff. Kudos to you and everyone involved."
■ *Shane Holten, Principal SPH Planning & Consulting (Toronto)*

"Good old Manitoba, shows the rest of the country how to do it one more time."
■ *John Lane (Vancouver, BC)*

"It's encouraging to see that the City has adopted such a positive philosophy for the future on a very important issue."
■ *Ainley Bridgeman, Chairperson Inter-organizational Access Committee (Winnipeg)*

"Winnipeg has a model we will strive to adopt."
■ *Lisa Nicholson, Halifax Regional Municipality (Halifax)*

"The city is to be applauded for the leadership it has shown in improving accessibility."
■ *The Honourable Tim Sale, Former Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, Manitoba Government (Winnipeg)*

## Contact Us At


**Access Advisory Committee**
Council Building - Lower Level - 510 Main Street - Winnipeg - MB - R3B 1B9
Phone: (204)986-8345 Fax: (204) 275-2720 TTY: (204) 261-7424
Email: jredmond@winnipeg.ca Web site: www.aacwinnipeg.mb.ca


Winnipeg

# Access Advisory Committee
## Annual Report 2002

## Councillor Gerbasi's Message



Welcome to the Access Advisory Committee's 2002 Progress Report. In the following pages, you'll discover who we are, what we have done and where we are heading.

The year 2002 will be noted as an award-winning time of action and advancement. Both Minister Tim Sale and the Manitoba League of Persons with Disability have recognized the Committee's work on universal design.

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. *The City of Winnipeg was the first city in Canada with a policy for universal design*. Other cities in Canada are at various stages of developing a similar policy.

We partnered with community groups to acknowledge community achievements in creating environments with accessible design. In June 2002, we presented the first **Winnipeg Business Accessibility Awards.** For pro-access renovation, construction and design, we recognized *Winnipeg Airports Authority*, *Wellness Institute*, and *Smith Carter Architects and Engineers Inc.*

By raising the Committee's profile both within the civic structure and in the community at large, the result is that people are paying attention to access issues. Even more exciting, people are considering and embracing universal access for citizens of Winnipeg.

With the dedication of progressive and proactive committee members, discussion, planning and action have reached the next level. Political will and a receptive civic administration have also contributed to an exciting year of progress.

Attitudes are changing. Access issues are now considered critical planning components. This means the City of Winnipeg places a high priority on making information, buildings and services universally accessible through design.

Universal design has contributed to positive changes to the City of Winnipeg website, the council building, and even the civic election. These changes can dramatically improve the quality of life for each and every citizen of Winnipeg.

While the work is far from complete, the committee has a strong foundation of work and relationships to build upon. We look forward to continuing to champion the important issues to create a universally accessible City of Winnipeg.


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