Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – November 6, 2013

REPORTS

Item No. 1 Access Advisory Committee – Audible Pedestrian Signals

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On October 22, 2013, the Access Advisory Committee requested a letter of support be submitted to the Executive Policy Committee for the Public Works Department Capital Budget proposal of a 10 year strategic plan for audible pedestrian signal system upgrades.

Access Advisory Committee • Comité Consultatif Sur L'Accèss Aux Installations
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October 28, 2013

Dear Mayor and Executive Policy Committee,

Re: Support for Public Works 2014-2023 Capital proposal for Audible pedestrian signals / accessible pedestrian signals commitment for persons with disabilities.

At the October 22, 2013 monthly meeting of the City of Winnipeg Access Advisory Committee, it was approved and recommended to send a letter of support for the Public Works Department Capital Budget proposal for a 10 year strategic plan for the upgrades to the audible pedestrian signals system. This of course is a major safety improvement for persons with disabilities, along with fulfilling the commitment of a Human Rights Commission mediated agreement between the City of Winnipeg and two of our citizens.

In 1998, City Council adopted a policy to install audible pedestrian signals / accessible pedestrian signals (APS) in all signalized intersections with in the City of Winnipeg. Fifteen years ago there was recognition that new and totally reconstructed signalized intersections would be built while a need to retrofit many intersections would take some time to complete. There were no budgets set to accomplish the retrofits by any meaningful time. At the rate of intersection retrofits in the early 2000's, the City would not be accessible until 2050. The policy for new and totally reconstructed intersections started working quite well early on and continues to be accomplished each year.

A problem came up with the installations in the early 2000's that involved the need to push a "difficult to find push button" to activate the sounds. These buttons were not related to push button intersections required for all pedestrians where one street has a huge traffic flow compared to the cross street. As a result of this controversial style of installation, a Manitoba Human Rights Commission discrimination claim was made sometime in the early 2000's. The claim also included a time line for getting the APS retrofitted and investigating a passive style of detection instead of the aggressive push buttons.

Approximately five years ago, a mediation agreement came into being between the City of Winnipeg, Ainley Bridgeman and David Martin. This legal agreement came up with a reasonable time to complete the retrofits, removing push buttons for activation wherever there is no need for a walk signal button to initiate a pedestrian cycle. The passive means of initiating a pedestrian cycle is still ongoing, but there is a solid knowledge of what technologies may work in the future. An annual mediation meeting happens where the stakeholders get together to determine how things are going with the agreed upon actions with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission continuing its monitoring of progress for this mediated agreement.

Currently, there are at least 275 signalized intersections with APS. There are approximately 360 more intersections to retrofit. The City of Winnipeg's traffic signals division (including Luis Escobar and Michael Cantor with the City of Winnipeg) are working with this mediated agreement. There is a plan to finish off the signalized retrofits over the next ten years in 2023 - some 25 years from the 1998 policy. From what we understand the traffic signals division has requested a budget line to accomplish this ten year plan to achieve all APS installations.

The Access Advisory Committee is concerned that this reasonable time line will not be met in these difficult budgetary times. This letter is being sent to you to ensure that the political process seeks to uphold the mediated agreement with Ms. Bridgeman, Mr. Martin and their representatives on the committee created by the mediated agreement. If you could communicate the AAC's concern and ultimate support of the budget proposal to the City's

public service, we would be very appreciative as well as all users of APS in Winnipeg.

Sincerely,

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cc:

- Councillor Ross Eadie
  Chairperson Access Advisory Committee
- Councillor Wyatt
- Mr. Brad Sacher
- Mr. Michael Ruta
- Mr. Deepak Joshi
- Mr. Michael Cantor