2014 Annual Report

Access Advisory Committee

Winnipeg

WHAT DO WE DO...

...we advise City of Winnipeg leaders on accessibility for civic properties, information and services and recommend best practices in Universal Design while building relationships with the community.

Looking to the Future and Acting Now

A Message from Councillor Eadie (chairperson)



The Access Advisory Committee (AAC) marked its 20th anniversary in memorable ways. Along with holding a community consultation to hear what the public says needs to be our priorities, we also hosted an anniversary event and recognized excellence in universal design via the Access Awards, which received a makeover this year.

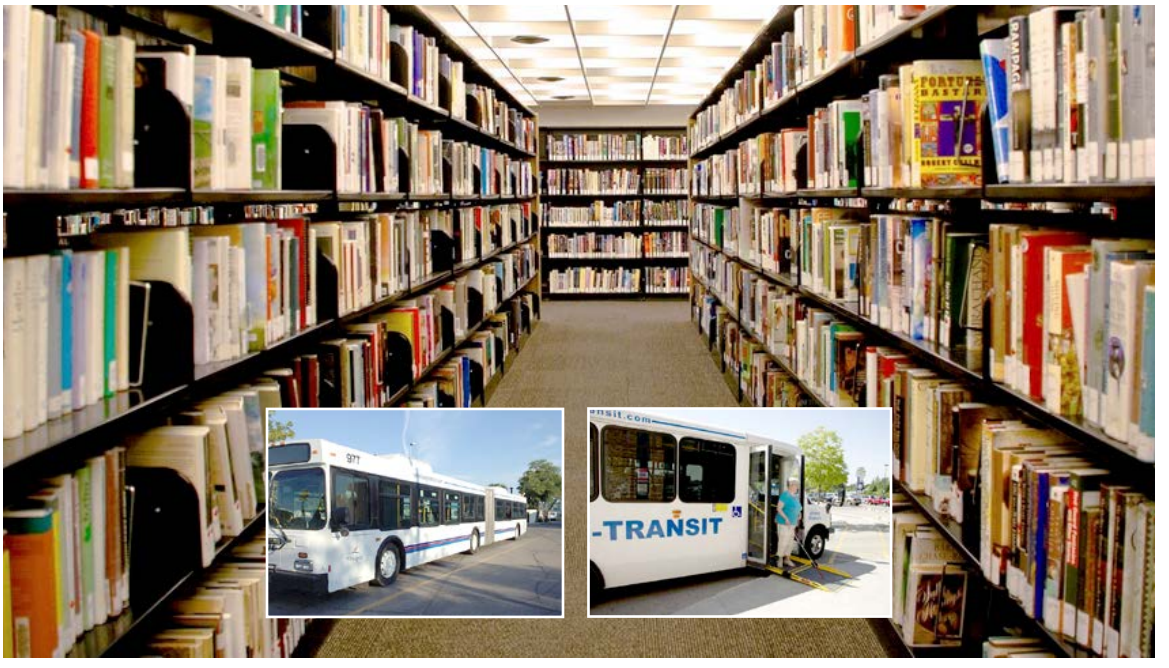
People told us the Access Awards were successful. From an industry perspective, the architects and designers were impressed with the changes we made. Doing it a new way has resonated with people, and as word spreads about the prestige of receiving an Award, the event can only continue to grow in positive ways. This allows the AAC to further educate people about the importance and impact of universal design.

We also contributed as a committee to the creation of customer service recommendations for the new Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

As a City, we have a number of things in place to remove barriers to information, services and properties…but the introduction of this legislation offers us an opportunity to examine where we can do things even better. As your civic government, the expectations for meeting the standards in the new Act are much higher than they are for the private sector.

The City has so many different services – from paying your bills at the City Clerk's office to participating in Leisure Guide classes – and those will all need to be assessed. There are also complexities such as customer service when riding the bus that will need to be considered. The AAC will be an important part of the City looking at every service we deliver, evaluating how things are currently being done and determining if there is an information component that can be provided in more accessible ways.

When civic projects are undertaken – new construction or retrofitting through the Accessibility Program – the AAC has



expertise to contribute to enhancing accessibility to the benefit of all. As a committee, we need to continue communicating with civic administration, project managers and departments within the City to ensure people understand the AAC can be an important tool and resource for the City when it comes to accessibility.

With new faces sitting around the Council table, there are opportunities for discussion and education around accessibility, the AAC and its mandate. I'm looking forward to helping bring Council up to speed about where the City's at and how the AAC can help further barrier free access so everyone has the same ability to work, play and learn in the City of Winnipeg.



20th anniversary



And the award

Leadership Award for the Advancement of Accessible Environmental Design

Bridgwater Visitable Housing

Manitoba Housing

Award of Excellence in Accessible Architectural Design

Mayfair Recreation Centre

Design Lead:
Wins Bridgman,
Marcella Poirier
BrdigmanCollaborative ARchitecture

Project Owner: City of Winnipeg

Award of Excellence in Accessible Site Design

Miracle Garden

Design Lead:
Monica Giesbrecht
HTFC Planning & Design

Project Owner:
Victoria General Hospital Foundation

Physical Access New Construction - Outdoor

Gordon Bell Greenspace

Design Lead:
Bob Somers - Scatliff+Miller+Murray

Project Owner: Gordon Bell High School



goes to...

Physical Access
New Construction - Indoor
Assiniboine Park Zoo
Entrance and Visitor's Centre

Design Lead:
Doug Hanna, Michael Hiebert - Number TEN Architectural Group

Project Owner: Assiniboine Park Conservancy

Physical Access Renovation - Outdoor
Grace Hospital South
Parking Lot Expansion

Design Lead:
Chantal Alary - ft3 Architects

Project Owner: WHRA

Physical Access Renovation - Indoor
Peguis Pavilion in Kildonan Park

Design Lead:
Dave Lalama - Number TEN Architectural Group

Project Owner: City of Winnipeg

Physical Access Small Project
St. Boniface Old Post Office

Desing Lead:
Jim Wagner, MAA, FRAIC - JRWagner Architect Inc.

Project Owner: Canad Post Corporation


ACCESS
AWARDS
Excellence in Universal Design
and Accessibility





The Access Awards

The Access Awards have come a long way from the mayor's lobby at City Hall. To celebrate the AAC's 20th anniversary, the Access Awards were renamed, redesigned and repackaged.

The event on September 10th at the Metropolitan Entertainment Centre (a nominated project) was unforgettable. Along with cocktails, the chance to view storyboards of nominated projects, the 100? people who attended also had the chance to appreciate the new design of the physical award that would be presented to winners.

Seventeen projects were nominated, and all offered special universal design features. Eight awards were presented after a delicious dinner by emcee Ace Burpee.

We're pleased to feature two projects that received awards and the inspiration behind the projects: the Mayfair Recreation Centre and the Victoria General Hospital Miracle Garden.



Mayfair Recreation Centre

What are the qualities in buildings that bring people together and make them want to share activities together?

That was a question Bridgman Collaborative Architects asked when looking at designing Mayfair Recreation Centre.

The first step to creating an accessible facility was to visit the existing facility to see not only where things could be improved, but how people interacted with the existing site. The building is one thing, but the range of programs offered out of Mayfair runs the gamut from parents and their children to seniors. It needed to be universal so everybody could enjoy the space.

"We worked from a philosophy of independence so a person – either with accessibility needs or children – could come and go," says Marcella Poirier, Managing Director of Bridgman Collaborative.

Safety was a big issue that was considered, explains Wins Bridgman, Principal Director of Bridgman Collaborative. "We wanted people to be engaged, to feel the site was accessible in its biggest way and to feel safe," he says. "We wanted to create a beacon of light that would shine in the park in a way that made it friendly, accessible and safe."

Among other universal design features – tactile elements, space to accommodate wheelchairs - light is a feature that is used prominently and strategically in the facility. The triangular windows not only maximize the light, they also allow people to refer to it in a way that becomes part of the community's language.



“It’s a good example of what happens when we go beyond the minimum requirements.”

Collaboration was an element of the project. The loading zone, for example, was relocated. That required a number of stakeholders –including the city, the Winnipeg Parking Authority – to make a reality. This move enhanced comfort and safety – but also independence from a user perspective. It started with a direct sight line so someone could see if their ride was there.

It’s details like this that reduce barriers and allow people to interact with a space in a way that enhances their wellbeing, regardless of their age or abilities.

“No part of the building is exclusive. Being able to see what is going on outside of the building so a person can be in control of their own environment with sight line is really important to us,” says Bridgman. “We had a number of groups working together to figure out a way the community centre can work with the community.”

The firm operates from the position that universal design is an important theme that helps them create spaces that respond to the community and community needs. It’s something clients have responded to and embraced: the understanding that universal design is integral to the way the firm’s team thinks about creating space and play.

“Years ago we understood that access and universal design was going to be fundamental to the way we thought and did projects,” says Poirier. “Receiving this recognition is an important affirmation that we made the right choice in our business model to ensure access, inclusion and universal design are a part of every project.”

This is the fifth accessibility award the firm has received, and it has inspired them to continue asking questions and listening to the answers. Every time the committee tours a facility and essentially critiques their work for accessibility, they have an opportunity to learn.

They also see it as an invitation to continually improve, and make each environment they design even better as they become even more thoughtful about what makes an environment

accessible. This curiosity, says Bridgman, helps create spaces that contribute to a better community and society.

"Watching this building when I drive home from work has been a pleasure for me," says Bridgman. "I see children running around the building. It shows me this is a neighbourhood place where everyone is welcome."

The road to the completion of Mayfair was a complex one that took a number of years with design alone. But the end result is something everyone is proud of.

The newly constructed Mayfair opened its doors in July 2014. The old property, which was demolished, was 1500 square feet. The new version is 3600 square feet, one level, and boasts a host of new features.

"The client is happy with the building in all aspects," says Tracy Stople, Project Officer with the Municipal Accommodations Division of the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development department. "It took longer but the project came in under budget, and what we wanted was what we got."

When universal design becomes personal

"I'm passionate and relentless in saying no, we need these things – there are no ifs, ands or buts about it," says Tracy Stople when referring to universal design standards.

Tracy Stople is a passionate advocate for universal design. The fact that she's a project officer with the City's Planning, Property and Development department means barrier-free access has a firm advocate for doing what's right and best, to the benefit of everyone.

It's a subject that is personal for Stople, whose mother was injured when the ground wasn't sufficiently marked.

Did you KNOW?

The Mayfair Recreation Complex is now a must-see when Stople takes architects on tours. For example, she took the team working on the Charleswood Library renovation, to show them what is possible with barrier-free access and universal design principles.

“People need to open their eyes,” she says. “That’s the way things are now… you never know about the future.”

“Through being involved in all aspects with her treatment and care, I’ve seen different aspects of accessibility,” says Stople, “mobility, sight, and the need for friendly, warming places. I’ve had to take her places with her wheelchair and thought, ‘there should be a ramp’.”

When people overlook the importance of accessibility, Stople believes it’s because they are thinking in the present. And right now, she says, a company may not have a direct need for an employee accessible washroom because no one is blind or has mobility issues.

“People need to open their eyes,” she says. “That’s the way things are now…you never know about the future.



Victoria General Hospital Healing Garden



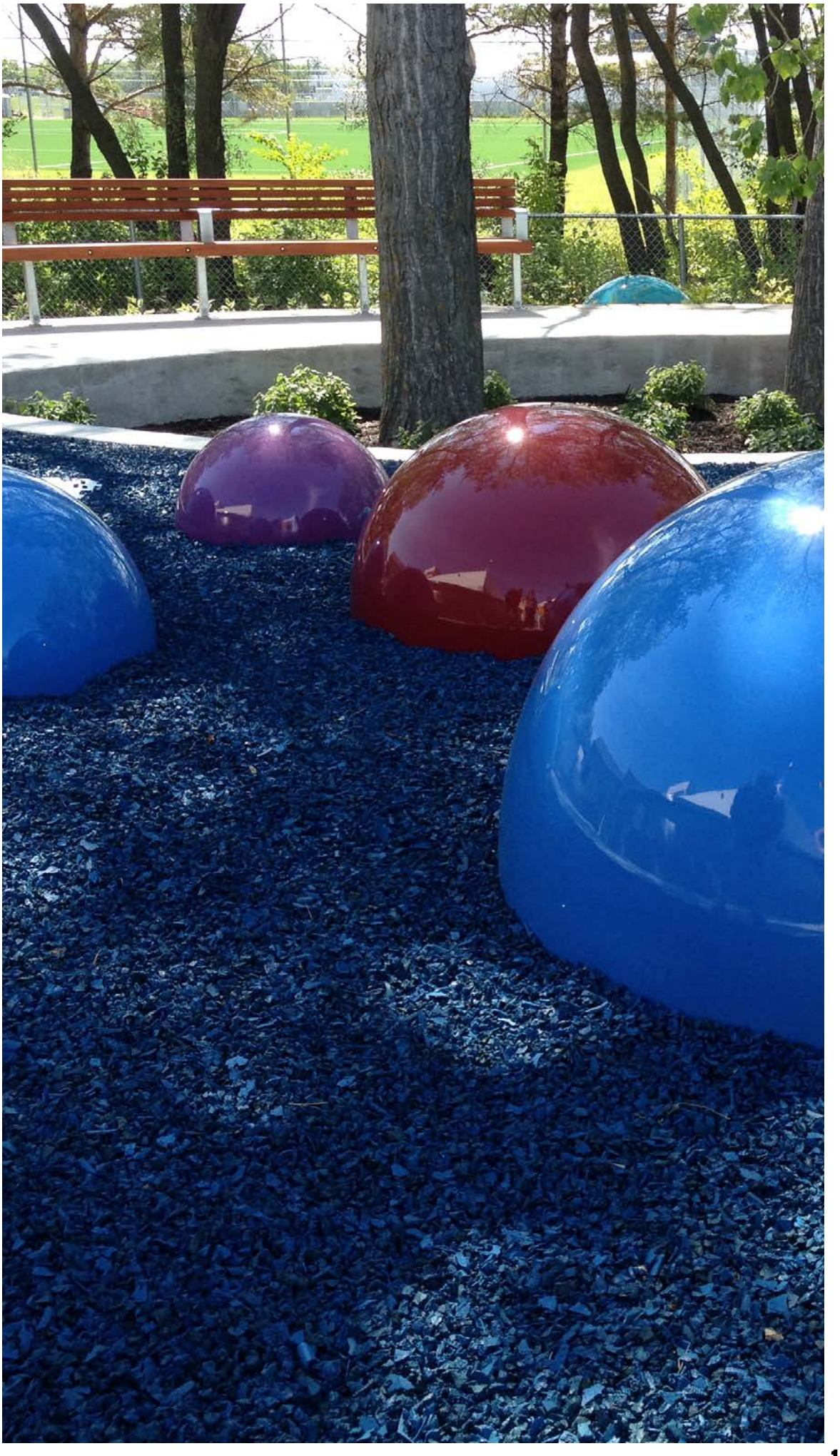
Monica Giesbrecht's parents – an engineer and a dancer - were what she calls "big outdoors people" who shared their love of nature with her. So it's no surprise her work provides an invitation for people to feel comfortable experiencing nature in as many different ways as possible.

"What motivates me is making the outdoors - be it urban, suburban, rural or wild - accessible and integrated into people's lives. My work is driven by connecting people to nature, which has the amazing power to calm us, teach us things and heal us all at once" says Giesbrecht, a Principal Architect with HTFC Planning & Design.

This, when combined with a focus on inclusive design, has resulted in a reputation for bringing people and the land into deep and meaningful contact – creating environments that have the potential to boost the health and wellness of all.

Giesbrecht approached the Miracle Garden project at the Victoria General Hospital from this perspective. She recognizes "this project was the perfect trifecta": an amazing client who believes in what you do, a great community that supports the creation of a therapeutic exterior environment with access for all, and a great contractor who works with you to make a beautifully crafted reality.

"The garden is a complete sensory journey, filling your eyes, nose and ears while beckoning you towards the most intimate experience of all – touch!" says Giesbrecht. "You will often see people absent-mindedly touching the water or letting the sun wash over their faces or seeking a quiet corner where their voices will be washed away by the sound of running water."





Giesbrecht follows an experiential and inclusive design philosophy. After talking to future garden users of all shapes, sizes and abilities she imagined the key social, physical and psychological experiences the space could offer to each type of user at all times of year. This inspired her as the need to come up with a rich, textured and ever changing place that feeds the mind body and spirit became clear through her conversations.

The result? All the elements and seasons are represented in a design that offers a soothing yet playful invitation to explore, relax, digest or surrender. Every sculptural form and special feature is constantly activated by light water or sound. Giesbrecht is proud to note that the garden is equally appealing to patients undergoing treatments, children who need to let loose, adults dealing with difficult life events or healthcare workers who need a break.

Dappled sunlight, cool water, surprisingly soft or prickly plant tissues or warm wood surfaces to name a few, elicit deep conscious and unconscious human responses in the garden.

"The garden is a complete sensory journey, filling your eyes, nose and ears while beckoning you towards the most intimate experience of all – touch!" says Giesbrecht. "You will often see people absent-mindedly touching the water or letting



“The idea of social inclusivity, access to all cultures with nature as a unifying element creates possibilities that go far beyond the physical environment to a social and spiritual access to a universal healing place,” says Giesbrecht.

the sun wash over their faces or seeking a quiet corner where their voices will be washed away by the sound of running water.”

Everything in the garden is strategically planned to allow for large group gatherings, intimate moments and to allow for a calming visual during private oncology treatments.

It’s this kind of careful planning resulted in a design that allows full access to all while promoting a unique and personal experience for every visitor. But the space goes beyond physical accessibility with the barriers it removes to other types of access that aren’t typically top of mind for many people.

“The idea of social inclusivity, access to all cultures with nature as a unifying element creates possibilities that go far beyond the physical environment to a social and spiritual access to a universal healing place,” says Giesbrecht.

It was nice to receive the award, Giesbrecht says. But the most fulfilling thing is people using the space every day, even in the winter. “Nothing says success like seeing people enjoying a space in ways that go well beyond anything you could have ever imagined,” she says.

An update on The Accessibility

On December 5th, 2013, the Accessibility for Manitobans Act became law.

The legislation outlines clear parameters for the identification, prevention and removal of barriers with the establishing of accessibility standards. These standards, once established, will outline baseline goals in the areas of customer service, information and communication, transportation, employment and the built environment.

The Honorable Jennifer Howard, minister responsible for persons with disabilities, identified customer service as the first areas of standard development.

Within the provincial structure, the Accessibility Advisory Council was asked by the minister to develop recommendations of what will ultimately shape the requirements for the government, public sector organizations, private sector and the not-for-profit sector to comply with.

Work began on development the recommendations in February 2014. Along with the writing of a discussion paper, public consultations were held and comments were received from stakeholders.

In October 2014, a set of recommendations for customer service standards were forwarded to government. Once the minister received and reviewed the recommendations, she instructed legal council to draft a standard based on the recommendations provided to her.

In February 2015, a draft of the recommendations was posted on the province's website. Stakeholders have 60 days to comment on the standards and make further recommendations for the minister to review and consider adopting.

"Any time we move forward in developing recommendations for a standard, it has to involve significant public consultations so the people who will have responsibilities under the legislation can provide their thoughts on it," says John Wyndel, Policy Analyst with the Province's Disabilities Issues Office.

for Manitobans Act

Where it's at, what this work means for you

The disabilities issues office is the administrative arm of the legislation. The next step in what Wyndel calls a "long-term process" involves educating people about the act, the standards and how both apply to them.

That will take some time, and likely involve penalties to ensure enforcement and compliance with the legislation and standards. Wyndel explains that is less about penalizing people, and more about educating people about why it makes good business sense to establish the policies and requirements stated under the standard.

There will also be a staggered approach to the standards becoming regulation, based on feedback received during the public consultations that made a strong argument for the fact extensions would support a successful implementation of the standard. Within one year of it being adopted, government will need to be in full compliance. The public sector will have two years and the private and not-for-profit organizations will have three years to come into compliance.

"Any time we move forward in developing recommendations for a standard, it has to involve significant public consultations so the people who will have responsibilities under the legislation can provide their thoughts on it," says John Wyndel.



Wyndel says, “We’re not going to change anything quickly. If we work together and cooperate in trying to put the standards in place, we can develop a more inclusive society. That means breaking down a number of barriers that affects a significant portion of the population.”

The legislation is not geared specifically toward persons with disabilities – it represents a proactive approach to eliminating barriers and creating an environment where everyone can work, play, live and learn.

The next area of standard development is employment, and work has already begun in that area, starting with establishing a council that include human resources and employment professionals who will begin looking at existing employment laws.

Did you KNOW?

The Council is made up of a cross section of people who will be impacted and have responsibilities under the legislation. This includes persons with disabilities, as well as stakeholders from business, municipalities and other sectors.

Splish Splash

Water offers options for activity and hydrotherapy

Water. Its soothing properties can instantly calm us. It can also offer people with mobility issues a safe way to get moving, exercise and participate. Water can also be fun. Splashing in the pool is often a fun summertime activity for kids young and old.

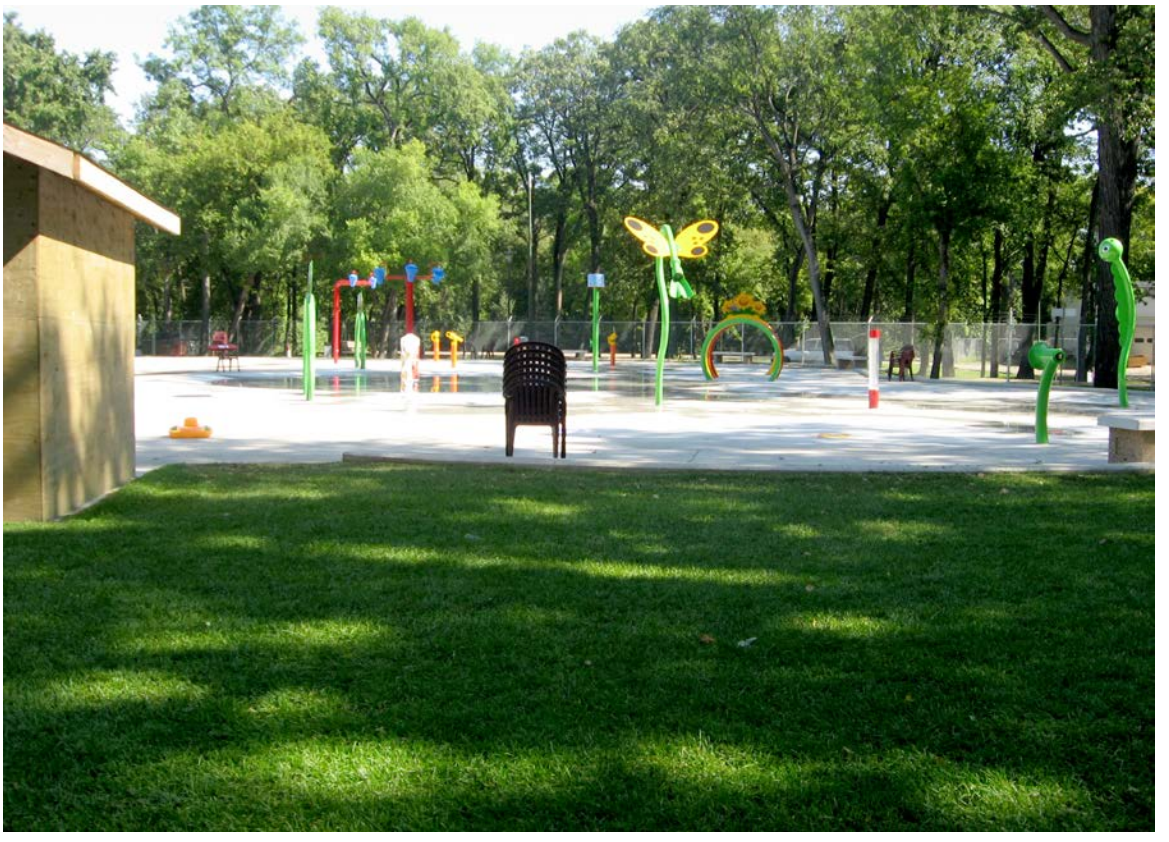
But what if you use a wheelchair for mobility?

That's a question the city continues to address for recreational facilities across Winnipeg. That's why time and energy has been invested into improving main public pools in each quadrant of the city, as well as downtown. Improvements like accessible change rooms and washrooms, ramped and beach style entrances are a start to helping make sure everyone – regardless of their abilities – can access a pool. In some cases, pools offer gentle ramped access into the water. In others where that isn't feasible, a lift system is being explored as a possibility.

The plan is to continue upgrading the smaller pools but it's a start to have everyone in the city have access to an accessible pool.

Another inclusive water experience is spray pads. Rather than wading pools, which can present challenges depending on a person's mobility, spray pads, literally provide a level playing field and offer the option for everyone to participate in cooling off during the hot summer months.





Retrofitting civic properties

The Accessibility Program earmarks $350,000 a year to upgrade civic properties with accessibility features.

Because the city's buildings are all aging, determining the projects that could best benefit from accessibility upgrades depends on a few key factors. These factors help when determining how to portion out the program's annual budget.

A few key questions – Is the facility in a heavily populated, high use area? Has there been a complaint or concern communicated regarding a barrier that requires removal? Is there a community partnership in place? - help discern where the money can be best invested to have the biggest impact.

Projects in 2014 included power door openers to the employee area at 1155 Pacific, a new walkway leading to the Brooklands Senior Centre, power door openers to the Boni Vital Pool and accessibility upgrades to Gateway and Waverley Community Centres. An aquatic wheelchair was also purchased for the Margaret Grant Pool, which allows wheelchair users a more comfortable option to getting in the pool and shower.

VisitAble housing standards now available...



The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies established a task force (that included the AAC). One of the goals before the group? To create VisitAble housing standards.

It took some time, but the task force determined the difference between an accessibility feature and what makes a home VisitAble for people with a variety of abilities. They looked at what other jurisdictions (both in Canada and around the globe) are doing with respect to visitability. They consulted a number of sources, including concepts from the barrier-free section of the National Building Code (section 3.8) and the separate standards document called CSA B651, (Accessible design for the built environment).

The result? The task force created four basic elements of a VisitAble home: a no-step entrance, wider doorways and hallways, one washroom with accessible features (including a turning radius, transfer space, wall reinforcement, grab bars on the wall, the ability to easily access the sink without twisting and lever handles) on the VisitAble floor and an overnight space for visitors to sleep. These four elements can mean the difference between barrier free access to the benefit of all, or difficulty visiting or living in a home.

"Visitability is a big leap toward minimum accessibility that hasn't been present in North America," says Chris Rootsaert, Housing Coordinator with Ten Ten Sinclair Housing Inc.

Perception around cost and how historically, accessibility features have not added to a space's décor in a positive way have been noted as deterrents to including VisitAble housing features. But Winnipeg's Bridgewater neighbourhood is busting these myths with fashionable and accessible homes that people are responding to.

Persons with disability often come to mind as the primary reasons for VisitAble housing, but the truth is people whose mobility is declining with age, and those who experience a sudden injury or illness can also benefit from these elements.



"If you break your leg and come home from the hospital, it can be difficult to get up the stairs and many people find they have to sleep on the main floor," says Melanie Reimer, Community Resource Coordinator with Broadway Seniors Resource Council Inc. "Having a VisitAble house gives someone the ability to get around their home without difficulty, but it also allows you to get in with ease with your children or a stroller. It's housing that spans the life cycle."

Aging in place housing is becoming a greater concern as the Baby Boomers age. When a home has accessibility features, people don't need to experience the stress of a move on top of life…when illness, injury or changes to abilities occur.

While at one time, a person might look at a personal care home as an option if they needed extra supports to function, today solutions such as VisitAble housing and appropriate community or health supports can mean a person can age in their home.

"VisitAble housing was started with the same concerns we're still facing today – there are individuals living in personal care homes that didn't need to be there but needed an accessible environment," says Rootsaert of the work Ten Ten Sinclair Housing does. "It puts artificial pressure on the health care system; including basic accessibility in homes is better for all of society."

What's next? The task force will propose the standards to the City of Winnipeg and province. They've also began discussions with Winnipeg realtors, who are open to helping market VisitAble housing as someone that can appeal to everyone and are even willing to develop MLS feature sheets and implement changes to make VisitAble or accessible features searchable in their MLS system.

The task force is also looking at a design contest to engage architecture students to have VisitAble housing on their radar and think outside the box when it comes to designing properties.



The individuals Rootsaert works with have experienced the stress of returning home after temporary or permanent injuries. "When someone is no longer able to return to their house because it's not minimally accessible, it's hard on someone. When they've recovered as much as they can in the hospital, where do they go?" he says. "It can be a hard dynamic for a family, which can sometimes be separated as a result. A move can be a very stressful event for anyone – might as well build smart and think ahead for the future."

The Bridgewater neighbourhood in Winnipeg is not only one of the fastest selling neighbourhoods in the city, it's also more VisitAble for a variety of abilities, including the chance to age in place. The neighbourhood is also very pedestrian friendly and includes accessible community pathways leading to parks, schools and businesses.

When asked, 89% of adults 55 and older said they would prefer to age in place.

Resources…visit the Access Advisory Committee's website at www.aacwinnipeg.mb.ca
Link to:
- VisitAbble Housing brochure
- VisitAble standards
- VisitAble fact sheet

Did you KNOW?

VisitAble housing - typically referred to as a movement aimed at changing housing construction practices so that providing a basic level of access becomes the norm - is originally thought to have begun in the 1980s, founded by Eleanor Smith in Atlanta Georgia in the 1980s. Sweden has had a VisitAble housing standard in place since 1976. Uniform standards are rare.


WOLSELEY AVE

Buffered bike lanes offer learning opportunities for everyone

As the city makes Active Transportation a priority in Winnipeg, safety and accessibility for both pedestrians and cyclists is also a priority. That is a main consideration in the creation of a Pedestrian/ Cycle Strategy for the City, which looks at routes and how to provide people with more opportunity to make choices in their transportation options.

The challenge? For transit passengers, pedestrians and cyclists to share the space… and to reduce the probability of pedestrian and cyclist collisions.

"We were looking at increasing the safety of cyclists on Pembina Highway, and balancing that with high transit usage and maintaining pedestrian safety," says Scott Suderman, Streets Planning Engineer with the City's Public Works Department, Transportation. "We're happy with this application with buffered bike lanes and plan to continue with that model. The plan is to continue for the entire length of Pembina Highway to have buffered bike lanes from one end to the other."

How does accessibility factor into this conversation?

Accessibility is one of the main things the pilot project on Pembina Highway looked at.

It started in 2012 when a portion of Pembina Highway was identified as a critical gap in the city's active transportation network. The need was identified to find a way to accommodate cycling demand – alternative streets with less vehicle traffic are limited - and a buffered bike lane was determined the best solution.

The first phase of the project looked at adding buffered bikes lanes on Pembina Highway between Chevrier Boulevard and Plaza Drive.

It was a collaborative process to determine not only the best applications but also the best

“We were looking at increasing the safety of cyclists on Pembina Highway, and balancing that with high transit usage and maintaining pedestrian safety,” says Scott Suderman

materials that could withstand our harsh winters. The final project integrated various design attributes, taking into account the City’s Universal Design Policy and Accessibility Design Standards, well researched philosophies for pedestrian design and the Highway Traffic Act as well as end user perspectives.

From the bus stop alone, details like the length of the bus stop platform, consistent placement of the bus shelter, elevation of the sidewalk, bicycle path and bus stop were looked at. From a cycling perspective, the cycle ramp slope and deflection, the width of the cycle path and lane were considerations.

Directional and wayfinding so that the bus stop, pedestrian and cyclist can safely – and independently – coexist include elements like the yellow detectable directional tiles, cycle slabs, charcoal pavers, and the blue paver square were incorporated.

And to test those design attributes, the AAC, the Active Transportation Group, the Canadian Institute for the Blind, and the Vision Impaired Resource Network were invited to test it out.

The yellow directional stripe was well-received as being a helpful wayfinding tool and it shows through the snow. Certain elements – like the cycle way tiles – were deemed less helpful, making the area slightly less comfortable and more difficult for the cyclists wheelchair users to maneuver.

When Phase 2 (the stretch of Pembina Highway between Bairdmore to Kirkbridge) of the pilot was launched, this information and feedback was incorporated. The cycleway tiles were no longer used and more boulevard delineation was provided.

And with Phase 3 on the horizon for 2015, the section between Chevrier and Jessie is an opportunity toincorporate further enhancements - such as stenciled markings on a darkened asphalt cycling path – as the City makes these facilities better and better moving forward.




PANDORA
NOT IN SERVICE
808
PANDORA STORE
NOW OPEN!
ST. VITAL
AALTOS GARDEN
DONT MISS OUR WE
SIGNATURE
SUNDAY BRUN
FOR RESERVATI
CALL 204 478 6

Member profile

Judy Herscovitch



At her very first meeting, Herscovitch asked the AAC to include invisible disabilities as part of the definition within the committee's realm.

She was pleased when they did so without question.

It's a distinction that's close to Judy's heart, given her daughter struggles with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. "She is unable to do a lot of daily things that people do. But because it's an invisible disability, people say 'she looks okay…what's her problem'?"

Because her daughter requires pain medication to function, Judy has become more aware of how people's perceptions can be hurtful, but also inaccurate.

"People with chronic pain diseases need medication to do normal things – they are not in it to get high. There is a major misconception in society about that. People think pain medications equal addiction and innocent people suffer along the way because of this huge misconception," she says.

She wishes people could be more compassionate, mindful and aware of how they engage with people in general, but in particular with persons with

disabilities. For example, a simple pat on the leg can send her daughter to the hospital emergency department in extreme pain.

"It's a nice gesture…but to do that without asking first could be harmful to someone in a wheelchair. And just because someone is in a wheelchair, don't automatically assume they need help. Ask first," she says. "We need to be mindful, and aware of how we talk to people, and the assumptions we make."

Judy feels strongly about how people with disabilities are perceived and would like to continue the conversation about how persons with disabilities are "whole people who happen to have a medical problem".

She says we're all people, and that there's a possibility an accident or illness can happen to anyone.

It's one reason she was excited the committee was involved in the developing of customer service standards for the provincial legislation. "Respect is part of that," she says.

Judy is in her second full term as a committee member with the AAC. She is most proud of universal design requirements, and hopes to continue ensuring physical barriers to receiving services are discussed with the hope of finding better solutions.



"Canada Post does not understand the issues people living with a disability face each day."

Member profile

Debbie Van Ettinger



Debbie Van Ettinger joined the AAC because her employment as Acting/Managing Director of Ten Ten Sinclair Housing Inc. made her privy to the barriers for persons with disabilities.

It's something she's familiar with on a personal level too. Debbie has Spina Bifida and moved into the Ten Ten Sinclair Housing Inc. when she was 18. "I got involved in the disability community because I wanted to work in the service industry to support people with disabilities," she says. "I wanted to encourage people how to respond when interacting with persons with disabilities."

Most importantly, Debbie wanted the same opportunities to make choices and take risks like anyone else.

This perspective echoes that of the University of Berkley's independent living philosophy, which identifies that people with disabilities are productive members of society and have the right to make decisions, make choices, take risks and decide on their course of life.

"Sometimes that means having a support in place, but basically this philosophy outlines that a person with a disability has the same rights and responsibilities that any Canadian citizen has," she says.

Through a five year old autistic girl in her life, Debbie can acknowledge the progress that has been made in the past several decades for persons with disabilities. "There are more supports, education and so many more people who understand disability. We've come a long way but I would like us not to go backwards, to continue working together to find universal solutions," she says.

Spending her days trying to arrange for supports to meet an individual's needs and ultimately facilitate their ability to make as many decisions as possible about what's best for them has made Debbie aware of how important physically accessible and welcoming environments, accessible transportation and the right supports are.

That's one reason she joined the AAC. She was also curious about the new legislation (the Accessibility for Manitobans Act) and hopes to play a role in addressing barriers within civic information, property or services for persons with disabilities.

"I have a wealth of knowledge that I could share with my colleagues. There are colleagues and peers on the committee, I can learn from and work with to change barriers for people with disabilities," she says, "and maybe even alleviate them."

Up ahead...

Providing recommendations around the awareness of universal design and accessibility is a key role of the AAC.

Building on what works, we'll continue to develop existing resources – provide a current and informative website, established relationships with key stakeholders in the community – share expertise and further understanding of accessibility issues with the ongoing development of the **Accessibility for Manitobans Act**, and finally working within the City of Winnipeg in providing inclusive and accessible programs, facilities, and services for the whole community. ■

Budget:

Financial Report 2014

Revenues

Council Funding	$ 69,0000.00

Expenditures

Meeting Costs	$ 6,750.71
Administrative Support	$ 40,850.00
Administrative Supplies	$ 3,192.79
Awards	$ 8,646.05
Website	$ 1,275.00
Communication	$ 1,700.00
Special Projects	$ 1,818.26
Total	$ 64,232.81

2014 Surplus/Balance **$ 4,767.19**

We're on Track...

The AAC completed a strategic plan for 2015 and has accomplished much of what we set out to do.

Raising Awareness through Education

Education is an integral part of the work the committee does. With each conversation, each email, each meeting, each presentation, and each trade show display offers an opportunity to continue a deeper conversation around accessibility and universal design. The AAC is committed to continuing to help people further understand the importance of accessible information, property and services for a variety of users, that ultimately benefits everyone. The AAC continues to lobby for a mandatory course for key City of Winnipeg personnel to raise awareness around the use of the Universal Design Policy.

Building a strong relationship with the Province of Manitoba

The AAC plays an active and integral role in supporting and providing feedback in helping the Province of Manitoba develop the details and standards in the five key targeted streams of service for the Accessibility for Manitobans Act. The AAC will continue to work in consort with all the stakeholder associations, municipalities, educational institutions, regional health authorities, and the Province of Manitoba in building a made in Manitoba model of accessibility for all Manitobans.

Development

Innovation and creativity are required as the committee finds new ways to do things that reduces administrative costs and environmental impact. A user-friendly website (www.aacwinnipeg.mb.ca), email campaigns that make the most of an established network of contacts and stakeholders, discussing how to use social media in ways that help the AAC educate and communicate with a broader audience are elements that help facilitate these goals.



Input on Major City of Winnipeg Projects

The AAC participated in providing input on many projects that made the headlines, as well as ones that didn't... We will continue to work with our planners and project design teams as a valuable resource in assuring accessible design as a critical part of any of the City of Winnipeg projects.

Access Advisory Committee 2015



Access Advisory Committee 2014

Mayor Bowman, **Ex Officio**
Ross Eadie, **Chair**
Devi Sharma, **Councillor**
Bonni Book
Larry Baillie
Louis Gaudry
Doug Gordon
Judy Herscovitch
Elizabeth Mitchell
Ken Shachtay
Debbie Van Ettinger
Alana Willick
Jacqueline Robertshaw
Colleen Watters
Chris Sobkowicz
Committee Coordinator
Judy Redmond
Universal Design Coordinator
Rochelle Viray
City Clerks Department

Contact Us

Access Advisory Committee
510 Main Street
Council Building, Lower Level
Winnipeg, MB R3B 1B9
Phone: 204-986-8345
Fax: 204-947-3452
TTY: 204-261-7424
www.aacwinnipeg.mb.ca

This annual report is available in French, in Braille, and electronically on our website at www.aacwinnipeg.mb.ca. Please contact us to receive your copy in alternate formatting.

“Working Toward an Inclusive and Accessible City”



ONE DAY...

we're all going to be touched
by the benefits of
ACCESSIBILE DESIGN...