Acting Now for a Better Future

A Message from Councillor Eadie (Chairperson)

In its 23rd year, the City of Winnipeg's Access Advisory Committee (AAC) has generated memorable action and continues to bolster valuable results for all Winnipeggers. I want to thank the volunteers and support staff wholeheartedly for their passionate work on the issues at hand. Much of the work, including the review of city policies, is completed by the AAC's subcommittees: Education, Accessibility Awards, and Communications and Policy.

In 2017, the AAC hosted an incredibly successful Accessibility Awards. The committee dedicated their time and put in a lot of hard work, creating one of the best accessibility awards that I've experienced during my time as a Chairperson. These awards help to generate necessary conversation and earn the AAC well-deserved respect from the architectural and design world. The awards reflect the dedication of these industries to implement universal design and accessible design practices. As a previous accessibility consultant, I realize that architecture is an art, and including universal design in the conversation benefits everyone.

Part of the work done by the Policy sub-committee and the people who participate along with AAC members is reviewing policies and standards developed by the province. The work done by the Policy sub-committee has greatly helped the City of Winnipeg's Universal Design Coordinator Judy Redmond move forward in the Customer Service Standard Regulation section of the City of Winnipeg's Accessibility Plan. Since the plan was introduced in 2016, the city has begun the training process for all City of Winnipeg employees in overcoming systematic, technological, and information and communication-based barriers. Numerous City of Winnipeg service websites are becoming increasingly accessible, including the Water and Waste billing system, with many of these strides and accomplishments stem from the 2016-2018 Accessibility Plan.

The combination of the Accessibility Plan and The Accessibility for Manitobans Act has helped shaped the way that decision-making information systems are designed to make it easier for people of all abilities.

As we move forward, we will of course continue to face challenges to come up with ways to create VisitAble housing and accessible public spaces. I cannot wait to see the outcome of the AAC's advice for the renewal process of the Our Winnipeg plan and how they will help shape the plan that will impact the entirety of the city.

Finally, I'd like to thank the ACC Coordinator Chris Sobkowicz's for his work as a passionate and dedicated Coordinator. Chis is invaluable in terms of his support to the committee and his commitment to getting these vital jobs done. Additionally, I want to recognize the huge effort of the AAC volunteers, committee members, and the city's Universal Design Coordinator, Judy Redmond. It is the passionate direction and work carried out by these teams that made 2017 a stand-out year which will continue to make waves in the community.

Access Awards

Celebrating the Spirit of Universal Design through the creation and design of Welcoming and Inclusive Environments

And the 2017 Access Award Winners are….

Sport For Life Training Centre

Don Beaton - Architect
NumberTen Architectural Group

Leatherdale Hall

Wins Bridgman - Architect
Bridgmancollaborative

Downtown Commons

Terry Danelley - Architect
LM Architects

Sir Paul E. Martin Estates

Raymond Wan - Architect
Raymond S.C. Wan Architects

Winnipeg Soccer Federation
Seven Oaks Complex

Jeff Penner - Architect
Stantech Sports Studio

Japanese Cultural Association of Manitoba

Grant LaBossiere - Architect
Blacktie Architecture

Booth University College

Gail Little - Architect
AgerLittle Architecture

RBC Convention Centre

Terry Danelley- Architect
LM Architectural Group

Bob Eastwood- Architect
NumberTen Architectural Group

East Exchange Streetscaping

James Hudson – Landscape Architect
HTFC Planning & Design

Upper Fort Garry Provincial Park

Glen Manning – Landscape Architect
HTFC Planning & Design

Constantina Douvris – Landscape Architect
HTFC Planning & Design

Steve Cohlmeyer – Architect
Cohlmeyer Architects

Special Recognition Award

Klaus Lahr
RBC Convention Centre
President & CEO

Cultivating Universal Design in Winnipeg

We chatted with the city's Universal Design Coordinator to get a glimpse of where we are, what we're doing, and where we're headed in terms of removing participatory barriers throughout Winnipeg.

What Is Universal Design?

"At the end of the day, universal design is simply really good design," says the City of Winnipeg's Universal Design Coordinator, Judy Redmond. Redmond recognizes that that Winnipeg is ahead of the game when it comes to universal design, but is dedicated to overcoming systemic issues through the utilization of progressive action.

When describing Universal Design, Redmond often refers to the definition penned by Ronald Mace, who also happened to the create the term:

"Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design."

There are 7 principles that designers turn to when assessing universal design of the built environment. These principles were created in 1997 by a group of researchers, designers, engineers, and architects led by Ronald Mace:

1. Equitable use
2. Flexibility in use
3. Simple and intuitive use

4. Perceptible information
5. Tolerance for error
6. Low physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use

How Does Universal Design Impact Our City and Our Daily Lives?

Universal design impacts the daily lives of all community members, whether recognized or not. Redmond often demonstrates the difference between accessible design and universal design by comparing push button accessible doors to automatic infrared detectors:

“With a push button door, there is an act that needs to take place. But for those with varying abilities, utilizing these buttons is not always accessible. An infrared automatic detector that automatically opens for all removes the act, and in turn, removes a barrier of full participation.”

Judy Redmond dedicates her professional life to improving the lives of Winnipegger’s living with accessibility issues and says that The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, the City of Winnipeg’s Accessibility Plan, and the implementation of the Universal Design Standards in 2001 are keeping the city ahead of the game.

“Policy is not law, but having The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) is proactive and gives the community legal ‘oomph.’ The AMA is systematic and therefore affects all Manitobans.”

As Judy continues in her position as the Universal Design Coordinator for the city, part of her duties include reviewing the new City of Winnipeg Accessibility Plan and checking in with city department heads to see where they are in terms of the action plan.

The City of Winnipeg’s Access Advisory Committee’s Participation in Universal Design Development

“The work of the city’s Access Advisory Committee is invaluable - not only for the support in decision-making processes, but for their consistent willingness and dedication to work on things. The committee members and volunteers alike are constructive in their approaches, and their contributions are amazing. I simply cannot do my job without them.”

Various volunteers and AAC members regularly help facilitate these trainings, providing training participants with their first-hand perspectives on navigating current city environments.

“Looking forward, I urge Winnipegger’s to avoid becoming complacent after such a big year in accessibility accomplishments. Actions speak much louder than words, and it’s our duty to continue moving forward. As a community, we must remain realistic and patient when facing challenges in the implementation of the AMA and the Accessibility Plan and continue to work hard to create a better future for all.”

For more information on how universal design is impacting the lives of citizens and visitors in Winnipeg, please visit:

http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/Universal_Design.stm

Updates on the City of Winnipeg Accessibility Plan

Keeping accessibility in mind as a future-forward city.

The built environment shapes our daily lives, and barriers - whether attitudinal, technological, physical, architectural, systematic, or information

and communication-based - create challenges in developing a fully participatory and functional community, both socially and economically.

The City of Winnipeg's Accessibility Plan for 2016-2018 continues to recognize the importance of universal and accessible design in overcoming barriers to accessibility for citizens and visitors of Winnipeg alike.

Working in compliance with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA), the City of Winnipeg's Accessibility Plan aims to cultivate accessible environments for everyone. 2017 was a big year for the City of Winnipeg and the Access Advisory Committee alike, and we will continue to commit to create accessible transportation, opportunities for employment, communications, information, environments, and customer service for everyone.

Want to review the most recent Accessibility Plan for the City of Winnipeg? Visit the Access Advisory Committee (AAC) website, the City of Winnipeg website, or via the link below:

http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/Universal_Design.stm

"We're getting places and consider Winnipeg a leader in accessibility issues, but that doesn't mean that we can become complacent," says Judy Redmond, the city's Universal Design Coordinator.

"Universal design is constantly changing, meaning that professionals and the public alike are constantly aiming at moving targets." – Judy Redmond

In 2017, the City of Winnipeg focused on implementing accessible customer service training for all city employees. Although there have been

unexpected impediments, the city's CAO and Universal Design Coordinator continue to make a concerted effort in incorporating Universal Accessibility Design Standards and customer service standards into planning processes throughout city departments.

The city continues to hold themselves accountable to embrace and implement concepts of accessible and universal design in creating an inclusive community where all members of the public can participate and thrive.

The 5 core highlights of the City of Winnipeg's Accessibility Plan guide the decision-making process of city council, public service leaders, and City of Winnipeg departments. We of course will face unexpected challenges along the way, but when we approach implementations with the goal of embracing diversity and cultivating an inclusive community, accessibility can stay in the forefront of everything we do.

In 2017, the City of Winnipeg made some major strides in terms of making the community increasingly inclusive and accessible, including:

Customer Service: In terms of accessible customer service, the city worked throughout 2017 to begin training the city's employee base on how to approach situations through a lens of accessibility when developing programs, practices, and policies for improved and inclusive customer service for all.

Employment: In Winnipeg, persons in the accessibility community are still underrepresented in the workforce. To combat this, we must become more representative of the population in hiring and training processes and making hiring people of diverse abilities a priority for the city and beyond.

Transportation: In 2017, Winnipeg Transit services continued to provide accessible Transit services for those with mobility aids. Handi-Transit also completed an independent assessment which found that moving an occupied manual wheelchair either up or down stairs creates a safety risk for Handi-Transit drivers and passengers alike. This has changed Handi-Transit service operations and standards.

For more information on Winnipeg Handi-Transit changes, visit the following link:

http://winnipegtransit.com/en/handi-transit/whats-new/

Built Environment: In 2017, the City of Winnipeg's Access Advisory Committee aided in completing a Barrier Buster projects at the Swimming Centre. With accessible entrance ramps and Hoyer-styled lifts, the Barrier Buster project helped this public space become more accessible and nurtures independent participation for people with a diverse range of abilities.

Want to learn more about the City of Winnipeg's Access Advisory Committee's work with these Barrier Buster projects? Visit the following link:

https://www.rickhansen.com/access4all/Projects-Showcase/Kinsmen-Sherbrook-Pool-and-Transcona-Swimming-Centre-Winnipeg-Manitoba

Information and Communication: In 2017, the city began considering investing in a website re-vamp to meet the accessibility needs of its citizens. Accessibility has become a primary concern in terms of providing best-in-class information and communication services to Winnipegger's, and the city has invited Lisa Snider an award-winning digital strategist, to run an IT workshop for City of Winnipeg staff members.

Keeping these 5 core components of the Accessibility Plan in mind while working to align ourselves with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act is critical to making ourselves a best-in-class, accessible city, benefitting the lives of many Winnipeggers.

The City of Winnipeg and the AAC acknowledges the continued responsibility and support needed to facilitate trainings and propel actionable results for the Accessibilities for Manitobans Act and our own Accessibility Plan. Our close relationships with representatives from organizations and people disabled by community barriers allow us to hold ourselves accountable for creating inclusive and welcoming communities for all.

As we move forward, the Access Advisory Committee will strive to create a better “big picture” for accessibility in Winnipeg by overcoming barriers to participation and providing recommendations towards emerging and ongoing City of Winnipeg projects.

Member Profile

Marcella Poirier

Marcella Poirier was wired to become a driving force for accessibility. Since joining the City of Winnipeg Access Advisory Committee in 2017 as a working committee member, Marcella has applied her professional skills and expertise to give back to the accessibility community while staying engaged with emerging issues affecting accessibility and design practices in the city.

Her time with the AAC has also provided her with insights into newly introduced legislation and policies while hearing community responses from a diverse group, working to understand what’s on the forefront of

accessibility issues so they can be addressed in her professional practice and beyond.

As the Chief Development Officer for the University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation, Marcella utilizes her technical approach to design to advocate for adaptive reuse and accessible design of buildings. Currently, the UW Community Renewal Corporation works within a split-portfolio, contemplating how existing buildings need to be developed, and cultivating new development project plans as a not-for-profit developer.

Dedicated to Participation for All

Growing up, Marcella's mother worked in a personal care home, and Marcella would accompany her on holiday breaks and in-services. From a young age, these experiences taught Marcella to understand two things: first, that these facilities were inhabited by the very young and very old alike. And second, that barriers to participation because of a physical disability are tremendously frustrating.

"We have to create a foundation to understand that ability and disability have nothing to do with age. Accessibility impacts people in different ways, and places that are inaccessible create sadness and frustration, which is not okay for any age demographic."

Since then, Marcella has always had a connection and interest in working with people with a wide range of needs and thinking creatively about how to overcome barriers to participation. Driven by the 4 pillars of sustainability - cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity, environmental responsibility, and social justice - Marcella has implemented her creative solutions in all of her held professional positions.

From creating strategies that provided best-in-class customer service standards to a range of people with additional needs to serving as a communications director to develop a story and fill in the gap between architecture and accessibility, Marcella is constantly observing her surroundings to find solutions and remove limitations of the built environment, increasing the quality of life for everyone.

Hopes for an Accessible Winnipeg

“The most important thing for people to address is their assumptions. Challenge your own assumptions, your design, your program, or your place. When you assume that everyone is able-bodied, sighted, and that everyone can hear, you have excluded a percentage of the population in participating with you. In challenging our assumptions, we have a requirement to change how we design spaces and buildings, and it is one of our greatest challenges right now.”

When she reflects on her hopes for Winnipeg’s future from a universal design standpoint, she calls on the community to begin eliminating public dangers and focus on safety and security.

“We must solve the issue of vulnerability for those with disability requirements. People are working and learning in spaces that lack accessibility. However, we can remove this vulnerability through inclusive and barrier-free design. As we develop design briefs, design new spaces and redevelop existing places, we must focus and work from a space that fosters creative solutions and innovations so that this type of thinking leads design, rather than being responded to.”

Marcella is pleased to continue her work on the AAC and wants to thank all supporters and volunteers for helping to create positive change for the accessibility community.

Rick Hansen Foundation Awards
Barrier Buster Project - Transcona Aquatic Centre

2017 marked a big year for the Access Advisory Committee and the City of Winnipeg. In addition to receiving the Rick Hansen Accessible Cities award, the committee was able to see the fruition of their dedication, efforts, and hard work in developing a new accessible public space: the Transcona Swimming Centre. Architectural elements included an accessible entrance complete with a low level admission counter, wide gates and concrete pathways for easy access to the lockers, and pool areas. The brand new facility was opened in the summer of 2017 and includes 4 water slides, zero grade entry (beach entry), diving boards, shade sails and accessible picnic areas, and universal washrooms and lockers.

To learn more about the Transcona Swimming Centre and its available amenities, go to the following link:

http://www.winnipeg.ca/cms/recreation/facilities/pools/indoor_pools/transcona.stm

Strategically We're on Track for the Future
Pushing for Change

Our continuous push for a fully accessible Winnipeg doesn't stop here. As we move forward, it's important that we don't overlook the existing barriers to participation that many people living, working, and playing in Winnipeg with disabilities experience daily.

Complacency is a step backwards; rather, we need to use this energy to propel the discussion of designing for inclusivity and diversity in our standards, our policies, and our legislation.

Attitudinal barriers are malleable, and part of the work of the AAC is to collaborate with City of Winnipeg officials to generate tangible and actionable changes.

The Access Advisory Committee is committed to:

- Raising Awareness through Education
- Building Strong Relationships with other Agencies and Stakeholder Groups
- Development and Input on Major City of Winnipeg Projects

AAC Members
2016 Access Advisory Committee

Mayor Brian Bowman **Ex-Officio**
Ross Eadie, **Chair**
Devi Sharma, **Councilor**
Albert Johnson
Angela Mayen-Obregon
Larry Baillie
Louis Gaudry
Elizabeth Mitchell
Gail MacAulay
Kenneth Shachtay
Debbie Van Ettinger
Marcella Poirier
Colleen Waters

Chris Sobkowicz

Committee Coordinator

Judy Redmond
Universal Design Coordinator

Leah Cowan
City Clerks Department

Visit www.aacwinnipeg.mb.ca to contact us for more information

Budget

Financial Report 2017

Revenues

Revenue Funding	$ 66,880.00

Expenditures

Meeting Costs	$ 5,129.53
Administrative Support	$ 44,000.00
Administrative Supplies	$ 3,274.97
Access Awards	$ 7,175.53
Website	$ 1,252.00
Special Projects	$ 847.50
Total	$ 61,697.53
2017 Surplus/Balance	$ 5,200.47

Co-ordinator's Comments

from the desk of Chris Sobkowicz

Again this year I would like to express my gratitude to the Mayor and Council, Departmental staff, and the City Clerk's office for the continuous support that enables the Access Advisory Committee to carry out its responsibilities. Given the ongoing nature of accessibility work within the City of Winnipeg, this collective approach speaks volumes about our civic culture and commitment to inclusive and access for everyone.

In Canada, we are on the cusp of great changes in the awareness, acceptance and embracing of Universal Design; however mandatory building code requirements and other accessible standards remain inadequate. In Winnipeg increasing public awareness of our Universal Design Policy and the impacts of the Access Advisory Committee and our aging populations are offering fresh opportunities to highlight the benefits and business cases for more emphasis on Universal Design.

As a result of and acceptance of the Universal Design policy, there is a prevalent trend by the whole professional design community to provide an accessible and inclusive built environment in a non-obvious and seamless manner; resulting in more equitable facilities, and participation by the whole community.

Every year and including this year, the AAC takes pride in recognizing those architects, landscape architects, designers, planners and owners through the Access Awards. We are beginning to amass exemplar and inclusive facilities throughout the city, and recognized as leaders in the country.

As a perfect testimonial to the great work the whole community is doing in terms of universal and inclusive principles over the years, The Rick Hansen Foundation recognized the City of Winnipeg in 2017as the "Most Accessible City in Canada", and commends the whole community for our commitment and passion to make Winnipeg Great for all.

The public and private sector have provided greater accessibility through a move toward awareness education and commitment and belief in accessibility and inclusion in Winnipeg.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to the volunteer members of the City of Winnipeg Access Advisory Committee. These passionate people have dedicated their time to the citizens of Winnipeg in identifying the barriers to active participation. These people have spent countless hours in developing a comprehensive strategy to achieve a fully inclusive and accessible community.

Did You Know Content

Did You Know?

Jocelynn Johnson has been invited to share her “idea worth spreading” at TEDxWinnipeg on June 13th, 2018 at the RBC Convention Centre.

Johnson’s TED Talk entitled “Service Animals are Not a Pet Project” discusses the fear, ignorance, and indifferences that pose greater threats to the accessibility community than physical barriers. In her talk, Johnson hopes to deliver the information others need to gain a better understanding of service animals, the reasons people integrate service animals into their lifestyle, and how their focused attention is vital to their success as a team.

Did You Know?

The City of Winnipeg has had a working Universal Design Policy in place since December of 2001.

Did You Know?

Information from the 2012 Disability in Manitoba report from the Manitoba

Bureau of Statistics, 15.6% of Manitobans over 15 years of age reported having a disability that limited their daily activities.

Apply for the 2019 Access Awards

The Access Awards work to raise awareness surrounding the importance of universal design and accessibility throughout the City of Winnipeg. Through a juried process, the awards recognize exceptional projects that highlight universal design.

Nominations for the awards run over a 2-year nomination period. Submit your nomination by June 28th, 2019 ….for the 2018-2019 Access Awards.

QUOTES:

“Accessibility is generally implemented by legal mandates. Universal design, on the other hand, is a continuous improvement process rather than a compliance process. Educational and dissemination activities are therefore the key to promoting implementation”.

“Universal design is a process of innovation because it requires people to think differently. ”

“ The demise of the public telephone and rapid adoption of mobile phones is actually a good demonstration that universal design works”.

“The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.” (Mace, 1985)

“….design for human diversity, social inclusion, and equality.” (Design for All Europe, 2008)