Who We Are

In 1989, Winnipeg City Council created the **Access Advisory Committee (AAC)** to advise civic government on how to make the City of Winnipeg accessible for persons with disabilities to the benefit of all citizens.

The AAC bridges City Council, civic administration and the community. We make the voice of the community heard within the civic structure and make recommendations about how to improve the accessibility of civic government, services and facilities. We also monitor the progress of access concerns.



Management Committee at work

Our committee, which meets monthly, includes representatives from the civic and provincial governments and community members with an interest in universal design. Management, Communication/Education and Policy and Procedure are the three AAC subcommittees.

We keep informed about how the latest technology, products and services can improve accessibility through regular communication with individuals and community organizations. We also liaise with other Canadian cities to learn what they are doing to enhance accessibility.

AAC MEMBERS

Chair - Councillor Jenny Gerbasi

Ex-officio - Mayor Glen Murray

Vice Chair - Doug Strong

Alternate - Councillor Harvey Smith

Provincial Representatives

Jim Derksen Yutta Fricke

Committee Members

Diane Caley	Jane Sayer
RoseAnn MacKinnon	Kathy Taylor-Hallick
Tim McIsaac	David Tweed
Colin Mathieson	Tanis Woodland
Sandy Popham	

Committee Administration

Judy Redmond Jennifer Ridge

Past Committee Members

Yhetta Gold Susan Morrow

CAO Secretariat Advisor

James Allum

Financial Report 2003

Revenues:

Council Funding .....$ 69,000

Expenditures

- Meeting Costs (operating) .....$ 3,650
- Education .....$ 12,200
- Administrative Support.....$ 40,000
- Website Design .....$ 1,000
- Office Supplies.....$ 8,650
- Professional Development .....$ 3,500

TOTAL .....$ 69,000

What We've Done

The past year has been an exciting time of progress towards universally accessible civic government, services and facilities. Here are the **AAC's Top Ten Activities for 2003:**



2003 Accessibility Awards

- Promoted Universal Design locally, nationally and internationally.
- Supported the Universal Design Implementation Team's recommendation to have a **Universal Design Coordinator**. In January 2003, Council approved this two-year term position, which operates under the Corporate Services Equity & Diversity Branch.
- Purchased equipment on behalf of the City Clerk's Department for closed captioning of council meetings and other city broadcasts.
- Redesigned and updated the AAC website to include information about new initiatives, committee members and universal design.
- Incorporated a pro-access message – *creating a pro-access environment* – into every AAC announcement and communications tool.
- Contributed to developing an intense Universal Design awareness education strategy.
- Compiled a database to track the contacts we've made.

What We've Done cont'd

- Liaised with Civic Administration for the Public Works Accessibility Program, through which $250,000 has been allocated annually on an ongoing basis for the purpose of increasing accessibility. This year alone, 24 projects were funded like automatic door openers and ramped curb cuts that have improved access.
- Reviewed accessibility of venues and information packages for the New Deal and Municipal Aboriginal Pathways (MAP) consultations and the Western Cities Conference. Accessibility features include: venues with appropriate washrooms, entrances and parking as well as the MAP Package being produced in other formats, including Braille.
- Researched other cities' techniques to determine the best way to communicate with emergency services for the Deaf Community.

Out and About

To increase awareness about universal design, we've hosted and participated in events, attended workshops and conferences and shared what we know about accessibility.

Consultative Workshop

To open a dialogue with the community, we hosted a consultative workshop in November. The community responded positively to our invitation to help define the issues and possible solutions for Winnipeggers with disabilities. Workshop attendees, who represented a variety of disability organizations, identified a number of issues which fell into three primary categories.

- the built environment
- education/other services
- transportation

A summary from this day will be distributed to all workshop participants. This valuable feedback will be utilized in the development of the Access Advisory Committee Strategic Plan.

The community told us they're excited about getting involved and helping to improve accessibility in Winnipeg. Here is some of the feedback we received:

- "Excellent discussion opportunity for the community to provide input."
- "Excellent day. There should be workshops like this every two years."
- "Looking forward to the next one."

2003 Winnipeg Business Accessibility Awards

This is the second year the AAC recognized Winnipeg businesses and organizations for using universal design to create a more accessible environment for the citizens of Winnipeg. Accessibility Awards went to the following organizations and individuals:

- **Business** - Best Western – Victoria Inn (Number Ten Architectural Group)
- **Government** - CancerCare Manitoba (Smith Carter Architects & Engineers Inc)
- **Residential** - Tranquility Place (Lanny Silver Architect)



Government - CancerCare Manitoba

Residential - Tranquility Place





Business - Best Western-Victoria Inn

This year, the AAC was at the:

- ***Obstacle Race*** for the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities
- Training Session and Fact Finding Trip funded by the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies in ***Starvropol, Russia.*** Committee Coordinator Judy Redmond participated in meetings, accessibility tours, fact finding and discussions to share how government and organizations in Winnipeg are working together to implement universal design.
- Accessibility assessment of the sidewalks, street furniture, pedestrian pathways and parks in the **Exchange District**. We also reviewed and helped develop the final report.

Access Advisory Committee
Annual Report 2003

COUNCILLOR GERBASI'S MESSAGE



I'm pleased to present the Access Advisory Committee's 2003 Annual Report, which will focus on who we are, what we've done and where we are headed.

The past year has been an exciting time of implementing the City of Winnipeg's groundbreaking **Universal Design Policy**. This will not be a policy document sitting on a shelf somewhere, but a significant action-oriented change in the philosophy of how we do things as a city.

Several major steps have been taken, including the hiring of a *Universal Design Coordinator*. One key role of this position is to create and carry out a training strategy to inform the City of Winnipeg administration and employees about the universal design policy.

There is always more that needs to be done to make our city more accessible, but it is important to recognize our successes. What does a more accessible city mean for Winnipeggers? It means the Council Building is accessible for the first time in history. It means people of varying abilities can access the city's website. It means that equipment has been purchased to make the closed captioning of council meetings a reality.

It means civic properties, information and services are proactively evolving to provide better service to the community. This is what is happening *today* in our city!

In November 2003, the AAC hosted the biggest public consultation we've had in many years. People from a wide cross section of the community provided us with feedback about the role they would like to see the committee play and the issues they believe need to be addressed. This valuable feedback will contribute to the committee's direction over the next five years.

I want to thank the Mayor for his support and congratulate Council for their role in facilitating progress on accessibility issues. Today, as a result of remarkable changes, the City of Winnipeg is developing *one of the most accessible cities in Canada* with a reputation as a leader in **creating a pro-access environment.**

We look forward to building upon our existing work and following up on the feedback we have received from the community. Our commitment is to ensure the universal design policy remains a living policy. We will continue to research advances in technology and policy, bridge the community with civic administration and work to achieve a universally accessible City of Winnipeg.

Where We're Headed

We're excited about the progress we've made towards accessible civic government, services and facilities, but there's more work to do. For the year 2004, we plan to:

- celebrate the historic day when the closed captioning of city council meetings is launched.
- participate in Disabled People's International Summit *Diversity Within,* scheduled for September 8 – 10, 2004. We'll also assess the Convention Centre and surrounding areas for accessibility in preparation for the conference and make recommendations for improvement.
- participate on the Universal Design Steering Committee (formerly UDIT), which will ensure the consistent application of the Universal Design Policy.
- engage the community and raise awareness about universal design with the third annual Winnipeg Accessibility Awards.
- explore new technology to enhance emergency response communication.
- update our database on an ongoing basis, adding new community contacts.
- examine possible formats for updating our contacts about what we're doing.
- continue to make recommendations to Civic Administration about accessibility improvements the community identifies as priorities.

Did You Know?

- On December 12, 2001, Winnipeg City Council unanimously approved the first Universal Design Policy in Canada.
- Universal Design is a proactive concept that takes accessibility for a wide range of people into account during the planning and design process.
- Ability, size, age, language and culture are factors considered when civic properties, information and services are planned and designed, using the Universal Design Policy.
- In December 2002, the Chief Administrative Officer approved an Administrative Directive regarding the Universal Design Policy.
- Thanks to a ***Sign Language Interpreter Policy*** (adopted February 2001), the Deaf Community can access civic services by arranging for American Sign Language Interpreters.
- The City Council Chamber is accessible by elevator for the first time in Winnipeg's history.
- The Council Building now has an accessible washroom on the second floor.
- The City of Winnipeg website **www.winnipeg.ca** and the AAC website **www.aacwinnipeg.mb.ca** have been redesigned to enhance accessibility and keep pace with the universal design policy.
- If you have an interest in accessibility issues, you can apply to be a member of the AAC. For more information about vacancies and applying to be a member of our committee, please visit our website.

Hats Off!!

The Universal Design Policy is a real and living policy because of the progressive action of *Mayor Glen Murray*, *City Council* and the *Civic Administration*. Their dedication to a "Healthy, Vibrant" City of Winnipeg has been the catalyst for noteworthy changes that improve the quality of life for everyone.

Thanks to *Drew Caldwell*, former Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities, for his support. We welcome the presence of *Christine Melnick*, recently appointed Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities. We value our partnership with our provincial counterparts who are doing similar work and are grateful for the input from the provincial representatives on our Committee.

We applaud the Province of Manitoba for opening a **"Disabilities Issues Office"** on December 3, 2003, which will deal with policy in this area at a provincial level.

For more information, contact:

Jim Derksen, Executive Director
Disabilities Issues Office
Telephone: (204) 945-7613

In our travels, we've met many individuals and organizations who are committed to universal access. We appreciate the opportunity to share with you, learn from you and work together to further improve accessibility.

We'd like to congratulate *Judy Redmond* on her new position as ***Universal Design Consultant***. Judy's years of experience with researching and implementing pro-access solutions will undoubtedly be an asset in her new position. We look forward to welcoming the AAC's new Committee Coordinator, ***Kathy Taylor-Hallick.***

"Creating a Pro-Access Environment"

This report is available in Braille or on disc.

Contact Us At

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