Access Advisory Committee
Annual Report 2004

Message from the Chair

It's been another remarkable year for improving accessibility in the City of Winnipeg, as the Access Advisory Committee's 2004 Report will show.

For the first time in Winnipeg's history, the February 25, 2004 City Council meeting broadcast on Shaw Cable 11 was "closed captioned." Now people with a hearing impairment can keep informed about civic government.



Councillor Jenny Gerbasi

The fact that Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) was founded in Winnipeg reflects the rich history of activism and leadership within our community of persons with disabilities. It was truly a homecoming when DPI chose Winnipeg as the host city for the Disabled Peoples' International World Summit 2004.

The City of Winnipeg was a key sponsor of the conference, demonstrating our civic leaders' continuing commitment to accessibility. Further city support through the City of Winnipeg Accessibility Program resulted in enhanced accessibility downtown. A legacy of improved curb cuts, audible traffic signals and wayfinding signage are lasting changes that improve access and benefit our citizens.

AAC committee members gave generously of their time and effort to the Disabled Peoples' International World Summit 2004 through volunteering, attending workshops and participating in the AAC booth at the Global Village. We liaised with people from all over the world who are dedicated to improving access. We talked about the City of Winnipeg's living Universal Design Policy and distributed the 2003 AAC Annual Report in English, French and Spanish.

In 2004, the AAC also compiled a report detailing feedback from a successful community consultation. The report was helpful in planning our activities for the year ahead. We've listened to what the community identified as priorities and will focus on issues we've never looked at before, such as visitable housing. Working groups are in place to address concerns around accessible housing, streets and sidewalks and city-owned facilities.

AAC members are passionate about accessibility and will continue to work with City Council, civic administration and the community to ensure the community voice is heard within the civic structure. We plan to further discussions, foster commitment and encourage action to ensure the Universal Design Policy and access concerns remain priorities. Our goal of a pro-access environment is ever closer but much work remains to be done!

Contact Us At

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Who We Are



Fifteen years ago, civic government identified a priority: enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to the benefit of all citizens. To advise them on how to make the City of Winnipeg's information, properties and services accessible for everyone, Winnipeg City Council created the Access Advisory Committee (AAC).

The AAC is a bridge between City Council, Civic Administration and the community. We ensure the community's voice is heard within the civic structure. Along with making recommendations about how civic government and resources can be made more accessible, we also monitor the progress of access concerns.

Our committee members, representatives from the civic and provincial governments and community members with an interest in Universal Design meet monthly. The AAC's subcommittees include: Management, Communication/Education, Policy and Procedure, Streets and Sidewalks, Accessible Housing and Accessible City Owned Property.

We liaise with individuals and organizations locally, nationally and internationally to keep informed about how the latest information, initiatives, technology, products and services can help create a pro-access environment.

2004 AAC MEMBERS

Chair - Councillor Jenny Gerbasi

Ex-officio - Former Mayor Glen Murray (January - May)
- Mayor Sam Katz (June - December)

Alternate - Councillor Harvey Smith

Provincial Representatives

Jim Derksen
Yutta Fricke

Committee Members

Diane Caley
RoseAnn MacKinnon
Tim McIsaac
Colin Mathieson
Liz Mitchell
Vic Pereira
Sandy Popham
Louella Shannacappo
David Tweed
Tanis Woodland

Committee Administration

Kathy Taylor-Hallick
Judy Redmond
Jennifer Ridge

Financial Report 2004

Revenues — Council Funding.....$ 69,000.00

Expenditures

- Meeting Costs (operating)..... 3,750.00
- Administrative Support..... 40,000.00
- Administrative Supplies..... 8,050.00
- Communications 15,350.00
- Professional Development 850.00
- Special Projects 1,000.00

TOTAL.....$ 69,000.00

What We've Done



Technology, partnerships and education played a role in this year's progress toward more universally accessible civic resources. We are pleased to present the **AAC's Top Activities for 2004.**

- We participated in the memorable February 25, 2004 launch of the closed captioning of City Council meetings.
- We contributed to the City of Winnipeg Accessibility Program Review Committee, administered by the City of Winnipeg Universal Design Coordinator, which determines accessibility enhancements made through city departments. Examples of the 40 projects completed thus far include shower chairs and signage in City of Winnipeg swimming pools, signage in the Council Building, and curb upgrades and sidewalk renewals.
- In preparation for Disabled Peoples' International World Summit 2004, we collaborated with the City of Winnipeg Universal Design Coordinator and reviewed the Winnipeg Convention Centre and surrounding areas for accessibility and made recommendations for improvement. Wayfinding signage from the Delta Winnipeg Hotel to the Convention Centre, installations and upgrades to curb cuts and audible traffic signals were implemented.

What We've Done cont'd

- We worked with the University of Manitoba (Faculty of Engineering) on the Audible Signals Research Project. The goal is to design an audible traffic speaker that meets diverse community needs, while considering reasonable cost, vandalism and weather extremes.
- The Community Consultation Workshop Report was distributed to all participants. The AAC identified four priority areas from this report and developed the 2005 Action Plan.
- We attended a planning day for the Red River Floodway Trail Coalition, a trail which will run parallel to the floodway and connect St Norbert with Lockport. We drafted a letter of support for the project and explained how Universal Design could make the trail accessible for people of various ages and abilities.
- We examined the proposed changes to the Handi-Transit Eligibility Criteria and Registration Process. We delivered recommendations to Winnipeg Transit and worked with community groups to develop an overall response to the proposed changes.
- We encouraged and supported the overhaul of way finding signage in the Council Building. New features like large and tactile lettering, Braille, contrasting colours and international disability signage making it easier for everyone to get around.

Out and About

This year, the AAC was at the:

- Disabled Peoples' International World Summit 2004
- Manitoba Aboriginal Disability Conference
- Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities Accessibility Awards Ceremony
- Independent Living Resource Centre 20th Anniversary Dinner
- Forum on Housing for Persons with Disabilities
- International Universal Design conference Designing for the 21st Century III
- Provided greetings to the Canadian Hard of Hearing Conference and the Canadian Council for the Blind Annual Conference from the City of Winnipeg
- Participated in the Multiple Sclerosis Society "Thumbs Up" Planning Committee
- Supported and participated in the MLPD Transportation Committee

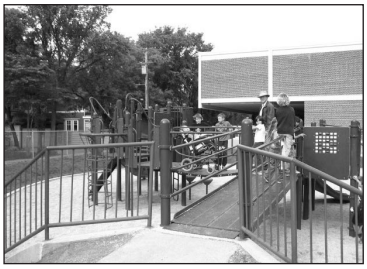
2004 Winnipeg Accessibility Awards

For the third year, the AAC recognized Winnipeg businesses and organizations that enhanced accessibility through Universal Design. We distributed Accessibility Awards to the following organizations and individuals:

- **Non-Profit:** Grosvenor School Playground (Hilderman Thomas Frank and Cram Landscape Architecture & Planning)
- **Government:** ACCESS River East (Stantec Architecture)
- **Residential:** The Epstein Home (Number Ten Architectural Group)

We recognized noteworthy entries for the first time with Honourable Mentions:

- Rady Jewish Community Centre for their Beach Entry Swimming Pool (Stantec Architecture),
- Millennium Gardens River East for design inclusive of all community members
- Convergys Customer Management Canada Inc for signage and considering the needs of staff with disabilities.



Grosvenor School Playground



The Epstein Home



ACCESS River East

Where We're Headed



We've made consistent and significant progress towards making civic resources more accessible. Along with goals we've identified for 2005, community feedback helped us create a to-do list that includes:

- discussing possible improvements to accessibility for city owned properties.
- exploring possible partnerships to promote accessible housing.
- developing and launching a "visitable housing" education strategy for developers, contractors and the general public.
- working with civic administration about how snow removal, the design and location of corner curb cuts can improve sidewalk and street access.
- creating Universal Design education packages for the general public and disability organizations.
- examining the possibility of producing Quick Tip brochures to provide tips for accessibility projects and upgrades.
- continuing to participate on the Universal Design Steering Committee to ensure the Universal Design Policy remains a living policy.
- coordinating the assessment and testing of newly designed audible traffic signal speakers.
- ensuring civic administration hears the community's priorities about accessibility improvements.

Universal Design Coordinator

2004 has been a very busy year for Judy Redmond, the City of Winnipeg's Universal Design Coordinator. This position was created in 2002 to work with Civic Administration after the Universal Design Policy was introduced. Acting as Winnipeg's voice for universal accessibility concerns, Judy's position is responsible for:

- Training and education of civic leaders and departments on all aspects of Universal Design
- Contributing her Universal Design expertise to projects throughout the city that deal with the built environment, programs and services.
- Reviewing sites throughout the city for accessibility.
- Providing administrative support through participation in Access Advisory Committee meetings with reports and information regarding civic progress in the area of Universal Design.

Judy is a professional, passionate and proactive advocate for Universal Design. The Access Advisory Committee thanks her for bringing Unviersal Design to the forefront of people's minds.

Hats Off!

Thank you to Mayor Sam Katz, former Mayor Glen Murray and City Council for supporting the Disabled Peoples' International World Summit 2004 through a transportation grant and the City of Winnipeg Accessibility Program.

The Universal Design Policy is a real and living policy within the Civic Administration because of Chief Administrative Officer Annitta Stenning's exceptional leadership and support for Universal Design and accessibility. City Council and Civic Administration have repeatedly shown they value a pro-access City of Winnipeg. Civic Accommodations, information and services are more accessible than ever because of your dedication to Universal Design ...thank you!!

We like to congratulate Christine Melnick, Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities, for earmarking funding to address accessible housing. We wish Jim Derksen, former Executive Director, a happy and healthy retirement and welcome the opportunity to work with incoming Executive Director David Martin. Our valued partnership and the participation of provincial representatives on our Committee are helping to further access concerns.

We'd like to extend a thanks to Liz Mitchell, an AAC member who volunteers at George Middle School, for teaching her students the importance of accessibility. Bringing her students on a tour of the Council Building has raised their awareness of the many accessibility features.

Mayor Sam Katz would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the members of the Access Advisory Committee for their ongoing efforts and commitment towards improved accessibility. The committee's work is a huge part of Winnipeg's reputation as being a leader in creating one of the most pro-access cities in Canada.

This report can be made available in Braille or on disc upon request.