



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2023





CONTENTS

- 1 Message from the Mayor
- 2 Report from the Chair
- 4 Mandate and Role
- 5 AAC Structure
- 6 2023 Committee Members
- 7 Community Engagement Subcommittee
- 8 Policy Review Subcommittee
- 9 People with Disabilities Policy C602
- 10 Events
- 11 International Day with Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)
- 12 Accessible Parking Awareness
- 13 Networking
- 15 Social Media





A MESSAGE FROM HIS WORSHIP, MAYOR AMARJEET SOHI

On behalf of City Council and the people of Edmonton, congratulations to the Accessibility Advisory Committee on another impactful year.

City of Edmonton Civic Boards are a great way to make a difference and provide valuable input on decisions that help shape Edmonton for the better. The Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to play a crucial role in building a more accessible and inclusive Edmonton.

From input on how to improve winter mobility to the accessibility of community centres, committee members' voices and experiences are incredibly valuable to our work. Of note, the partnership with the Edmonton Transit Service has helped improve transportation experiences for those living with different levels of disability. As a former bus driver, I'm confident this work will make a significant difference in the lives of countless Edmontonians.

The efforts of committee members to meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities are more important than ever as our city continues to grow. I commend the Accessibility Advisory Committee for their dedication to making our city a better place to live, work and play.

A. Sohi

Amarjeet Sohi
Mayor, City of Edmonton





REPORT FROM THE CHAIR, TONIA LARIVIERE

As Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), I would like to acknowledge the contributions of our members; each member brings diverse experience with a common goal: to improve accessibility for all who live and visit our city.

It has been another year of advancements in accessibility within the city. Some big, some small, all are gains. We are encouraged that City Council and administration are engaging with us for feedback, respecting our experiences, and taking steps to be a more inclusive city for those who experience a disability and its current barriers.

We started our term year with a strategic planning session to ensure our goals aligned with City Council priorities of Affordable Housing, Community Safety, Climate Resiliency, Core Services, and Infrastructure — all of which require an accessibility lens.

While we advise on various matters, our long-standing priorities include affordable and accessible housing, snow and ice control, transportation, and a reliable para-transit system. We were pleased to learn that accessible features are being incorporated into Rapid Housing developments; we continue to advise on an Assisted Snow Removal Program and regularly meet with Vehicle for Hire as they update us on the new accessibility driver training.

In 2019, City Council passed Policy C602, Accessibility for People With Disabilities; a three-year Corporate Accessibility Plan was developed (2021-2024) with 70 action items. To date, 32 actions are complete, 33 are in progress, and five have been closed. We meet regularly with the Chair of the Corporate Accessibility Steering Committee; we had the opportunity to provide input on the 2021-2024 plan, and look forward to engaging on the next round of corporate actions for the 2025-2027 plan. We thank them for their fundamental work and the respect they have shown the AAC.



After a unanimous vote to strike, Dedicated Accessible Transit Service (DATS) joins the ETS conventional operators' local union, an essential step towards equity. DATS drivers will now receive the same wages and working conditions as ETS drivers. Most would be surprised to learn that DATS provides between 50,000 – 66,000 rides a month! Negotiations were closed, so we were limited in how we could support the DATS drivers. The AAC did write the City to express our deep concern and the vital need for this service.

A highlight of this year was participating in the public hearings for the Zoning Bylaw Renewal initiative. It was exciting to participate in this democratic process with so many more who genuinely care about the well-being of our neighbourhoods and our city. Accessible neighbourhoods, increased housing options, ability to age-in-place were some topics for improvement. We will continue to advocate

for accessible design standards to be foundational to this living bylaw.

The AAC receives tremendous support from city administration, and the needle moves on accessibility in our city with their support. A very special thank you to Allyson Szafranski for her foundational support of the AAC.

Councillor Keren Tang and Councillor Jo-Anne Wright continue to fill the roles of our Council Representatives; we are thankful for their guidance and contributions.

It is an honour to be a member of the AAC; together, we are removing barriers. Thank you to everyone who has respected our collective advisory voice and responded in kind and progress.



MANDATE AND ROLE OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As an advisory body to Edmonton City Council, the AAC seeks to understand the unique accessibility and inclusivity needs of the Edmonton community, and how these needs relate to City Council's strategy and policy direction. The AAC undertakes a significant role in helping City Council address the manner in which its strategies and policies impact people with disabilities and provides advice on best practices for engaging Edmontonians with disabilities.

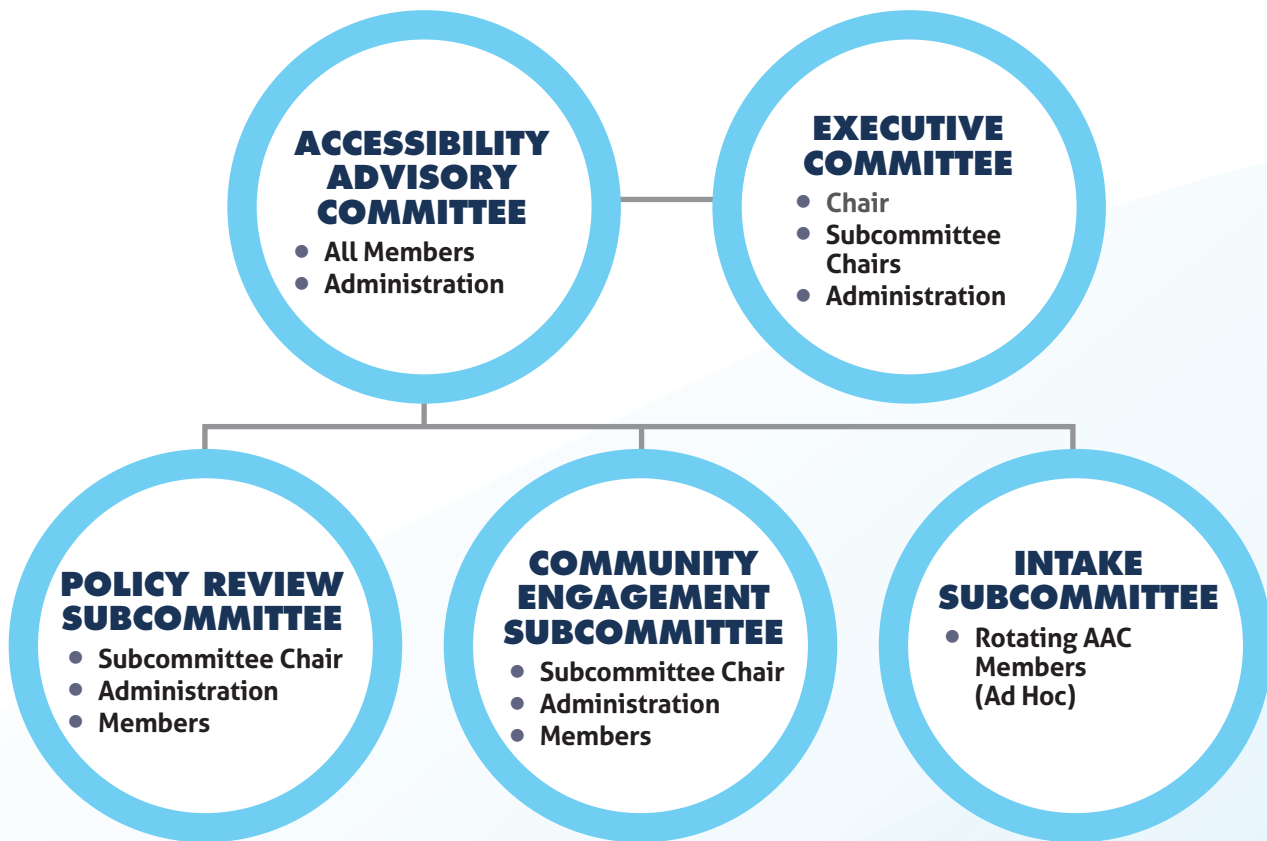
To undertake its mandate in the area of providing policy advice to City Council and City Administration, the AAC has identified the following as priority areas:

- 1. Advise** City Council and City Administration on policies, potential policies, or changes to existing policies that affect access and inclusion for persons with disabilities.
- 2. Participate in and support events** and opportunities that enhance overall awareness of inclusion and accessibility issues in Edmonton.
- 3. Engage** with broader communities of persons with disabilities in a meaningful way, and ensure that the AAC has the necessary information to undertake its advisory role.
- 4. Educate City Council, City Administration and the public** on issues and best practices around inclusion and accessibility.





ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE





2023 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Reappointments

- David Achuroa
- Dana Antaya-Moore
- Bobbi Belsek
- Carleen Brenneis
- Marie Dancsok
- Patricia Kocon
- Tonia LaRiviere
- Douglas Rudolph
- Patrycia Rzechowka
- Cynthia Sneddon
- Ilara Stefaniuk-Gaudet
- Marcy Vautour
- Zachary Weeks

New Appointments

- Karima Ewig
- Sam Mason

Outgoing Members

- Sheri Klassen
- Kassi Boyd





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

OVERVIEW OF THE 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Presentation on the City's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program Pilot in Community Recreation and Culture.
- Reviewed the Radical Inclusion Transportation Report.
- Meeting with Social Media service provider to discuss social media strategy.
- Housing Needs Assessment presentation.
- Discussed the Transit Camp event.
- National AccessAbility Week — AAC Video released.
- National AccessAbility Week — daily action calendar.
- Provincial Election — messages and talking points around disability.
- Preparing Social Media posts on accessible/affordable housing.
- Presentation on the national 'Treat Accessibly' movement.
- Snow and Ice control presentation.
- Vehicle for Hire — recruit folks for persona development for driver training.
- Sharing the Accessible Events and Meeting Guide.





POLICY REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

- Vehicle for Hire presentation on Driver Training updates.
- Integrated Infrastructure Services presentation on Clareview Recreation Centre Entrance redesign.
- Vehicle for Hire presentation on the work plan and driver/passenger Bill of Rights.
- Transit ARC Card Question & Answers.
- Providing feedback on the CIVIDA Accessibility Framework.
- VISIBLE Housing conversation.
- Ranking of budget-approved Capital Projects for the AAC to have presentations on.
- Letter sent to the City Manager regarding DATS drivers labour negotiations.
- Snow and Ice Control discussion.
- AAC sent a letter to Pride organizations about how to support Accessible Events & Meetings.
- Imagine Jasper Avenue Presentation.
- Reviewed the changes to the Complete Streets Policy.
- Reviewed the Edmonton Transit Services Advisory Board - Winter Report.
- Reviewed the new AAC bylaw approved by Council.
- Discussion about the Pleasantview Off Leash Dog Park event.
- Membership Feedback Survey.
- Discussed the Unfunded Service Package for Assisted Snow Clearing.
- Drafting an Open Letter on Accessible and Affordable Housing.

INTAKE MEETINGS

- **February** — Community Sandbox Program
- **October** — DATS/On Demand Comingling Information Report



CITY POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: C602

REFERENCE:

ADOPTED BY:
City Council September 24, 2019

SUPERSEDES:
C463 Accessibility to City of Edmonton Owned and Occupied Buildings
C466 Integration of Persons with Disabilities
C589 Accessible Participation in Council Meetings, Committee Meetings, and Public Hearings Meetings for Individuals with Disabilities

PREPARED BY: Integrated Infrastructure Services and Citizen Services

DATE: Sept 18 2019
NEXT REVIEW: 2024

TITLE: Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Policy Statement:

Accessibility is fundamental to the quality of life, well-being, and engagement of individuals with disabilities in the social, economic, cultural, spiritual and political aspects of society.

The City of Edmonton is committed to pursuing the following objectives:

- Accessibility and continuous improvement where people with disabilities have equitable opportunities to access, participate and contribute. To provide the greatest level of access, participation, and opportunities to contribute for people with disabilities, the City of Edmonton applies an accessibility lens to:
 - Policies;
 - Civic Engagement;
 - Programs and Services;
 - Employee Services;
 - Communications and Technology; and
 - Infrastructure (facilities, open spaces, transportation).
- Identification, removal, and prevention of attitudinal, systemic, physical, communication and technology barriers. The City of Edmonton acknowledges that individuals have multiple identity

This policy is subject to any specific provisions of the Municipal Government Act or other relevant legislation or Union Agreement.

REFERENCE:

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

Since 2019, Policy C602 is working towards enabling a better life for all Edmontonians. The vision with accessibility work is to create a culture of acceptance and inclusion to enable full participation of Edmontonians. The City Executive leadership team endorsed the first three year Corporate Accessibility Plan in June 2021. Out of the 70 accessibility actions in the Plan:

- 32 actions completed
- 33 actions in progress
- 5 actions closed

Accomplishments in the second year include:

- Creating an evaluation matrix to measure the effectiveness of the policy implementation
- Developing a Public Accommodations Framework to create awareness of the **Duty to Accommodate under Human Rights legislation** and guide staff in managing and tracking accommodation requests from members of the public
- Updating the **Accessibility for People with Disabilities** page for all accessibility information and resources

- Incorporating best practices for interview accommodations into the Hiring Manager Certification training
- Developing a colour vision deficiency-friendly palette for public data visualizations
- Creating accessibility training for staff and consultants working on capital projects, which included a series of awareness videos showcasing people with disabilities speaking to the impact of accessible infrastructure

The AAC is excited to follow and support the progress of the Corporate Accessibility Plan and has regular

check-the

Steering



committee ins with Chair of the Corporate Accessibility Committee.



EVENTS

NATIONAL ACCESSABILITY WEEK (NAAW)

National AccessAbility Week celebrates the contributions of people with disabilities and functional impairments. The celebration recognizes the efforts of individuals, communities and workplaces to enhance inclusion by removing barriers. NAAW aims to act as a tool for social change by creating conversations around the issues of education, transportation, housing, employment and recreation across the country.

Many organizations plan events throughout the week of May 29th to June 4th to celebrate and recognize the efforts of individuals and groups making our communities more welcoming and accessible.

The AAC created a social media calendar to highlight actions citizens can take to be more accessible or inclusive, as well as releasing a video on accessibility.



~~Handicapped Space.~~ Accessible Space.

Words matter.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (IDPD)



The International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 47/3. The annual observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, December 3, aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. The theme of the Day is based on the goal of full and equal enjoyment of human rights and participation in society by persons with disabilities, established by the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the General Assembly in 1982. As of December 18th, 2007, the UN changed the name from International Day of Disabled Persons to the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. **Transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fuelling an accessible and equitable world** was the theme of this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The AAC used its social media channels to amplify and support events taking place in the community as well as supporting City of Edmonton corporate events.



From
January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023
there were

3,006 parking tickets issued

by the City of Edmonton to vehicles parked illegally in designated accessible parking stalls; an increase from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, which had **2,542 tickets** issued for the same violation.

ACCESSIBLE PARKING AWARENESS



The Accessibility Advisory Committee took on a focussed social media campaign to spread awareness year round accessible parking stalls and their importance to the community.





NETWORKING

Listed below are the activities the Committee's members were engaged in. Members volunteered over 1,400 hours to committee work in 2023.

Guests Attending Monthly AAC meetings

Presenters (General meeting)

- **January** — Mike Chow, Director, SISI presented on 'Policy Development'.
- **February** — AAC Members prepared a 'Mental Health Presentation'.
- **March/April** — Facilitated Strategic Planning
- **May** — Mayor Sohi spoke
- **June** — Suzanne Young and Yogi Subramonian from Integrated Infrastructure Services presented on budget approved Capital projects.
- **July** — Erin Black and Diana O'Donoghue from Affordable Housing Section presented on Affordable and Accessible Housing.
- **September** — Suzanne Young and Yogi Subramonian presented the Corporate Accessibility Policy C602 update on Corporate Actions.
- **October** — Nada Djokic, VFH Program Lead, presented on the Vehicle for Hire Workplan
- **November** — City Clerk's Office presented on new Committee Bylaw and procedures; Douglas Sernecky and Adrian Benoit presented on the City's Rapid Housing initiatives.
- **December** — Cassidy Munro from Edmonton Public Library's presented on library accessibility, as well Alexis Hillyard from Stump Kitchen did a cooking demonstration/participation in the accessible kitchen.





NETWORKING

Conferences/Meetings Attended by Committee Members

- **February 8** — Douglas Rudolph, Marie Dancso and Patrycia Rzechowka participated in a Blanket Exercise event hosted by WAVE.
- **March 18** — Tonia LaRiviere participated in a 'Transit Camp' organized by Councillor Janz.
- **April 14** — Zachary Weeks tested out prototype temporary ramps for Parks & Road Operations.
- **April 20** — Douglas Rudolph, David Achuroa, Patti Kocon and Zach Weeks attended an in person LRT Valleyline West low floor car testing.
- **March 21** — Tonia LaRiviere & Dana Antaya-Moore attended the Interagency Committee on Inclusive Recreation at the ACT Centre.
- **May 24** — Dana Antaya-Moore attended Zoning Bylaw presentation.
- **May 25th** — Tonia LaRiviere & Dana Antaya-Moore attended the GEDI Gateway Association Mayor's Lunch.
- **June 22** — Douglas Rudolph attended CNIB Public Forum Journey Mapping.
- **July 14** — Bobbi Belsek attended the Interagency on Inclusive Recreation "Try it" adaptive equipment event with Rocky Mountain Adaptive out of Canmore.
- **September 29** — Tonia LaRiviere & Dana Antaya-Moore attended an intersection visit in the Highlands neighbourhood as a follow up to the Reimagine Jasper Avenue presentation.
- **October 12** — Tonia LaRiviere attended CNIB 'Get on Board' event on Transit.
- **October 21** — Members supported the 'Treat Accessibly' event in the Summerside neighbourhood.
- **November 7** — Dana Antaya-Moore, Karima Ewig and David Achuroa attended the Ignite Conference.
- **November 23** — David Akanpentiba Achuroa and Bobbi Belsek attended the Interagency Committee on Inclusive Recreation meeting for a Rogers Place accessibility tour.
- **November** — Members of the AAC participated in the Vehicle for Hire Driver Training persona development.



NETWORKING

Presentations Done by Committee Members

- **January 10** — Marie Danscok, Cynthia Sneedon and Sherri Klassen presented on Mental Health/Addiction and disabilities.
- **May 11** — Tonia LaRiviere gave an interview for Taproot Edmonton on accessibility for restaurant outdoor patios.
- **June 19** — Global/CTV/City coverage of Snow and Ice Control at Council.
- **September 1** — Tonia LaRiviere co presented to the City's Community Building Social Workers.
- **December 6** — Tonia LaRiviere and Patrycia Rzechowka were panellists in the City's One World Festival panel on 'Belonging: A Panel Discussion on Creating Inclusive Workplaces'.
- **December 10** — Zachary weeks collaborated and provided downtown tours.

Council Meetings — AAC Speaking to Council

- **June 19** — Tonia LaRiviere spoke at Council on Snow and Ice Control
- **July 11** — Tonia LaRiviere spoke to Council on Assisted Snow and Ice Programs
- **October 16** — Tonia LaRiviere spoke to Public Hearings on Zoning Renewal Bylaw



SOCIAL MEDIA

The AAC desires to use social media for large scale, bidirectional, transparent public conversations and identifies the following goals for social media work that align with ongoing strategic planning:

1. Educate the public on the need for intersectional accessibility in Edmonton.
2. Raise awareness about the breadth of accessibility needs, going beyond just the physical to also address attitudinal, systemic, communication, and technological barriers.
3. Use social media as a bidirectional communications channel to build relationships and to connect the advocacy work of the Committee to the public and to City Council.



KEY MESSAGES

- True accessibility benefits all of us.
- We all have a right to fully participate in our city, and accessibility allows us to do that.
- Accessibility is about removing all barriers for all people. System change is necessary to do so.
- Accessibility needs to be included at the beginning of planning processes. It shouldn't just be an afterthought.
- To succeed in our goal of making our city more accessible, we need to challenge the status quo for real.





SOCIAL MEDIA

AAC is still regularly tagged by people, advocates and organizations; it is a powerful space to reach its engaged audience. X has value as it's one of the only social media platforms that has not blocked news from Canadian sources. So it's a key space to share media articles, which is of particular importance for this audience.



X stats/Twitter 2023

2023 X (Twitter) started out strong for AAC, reaching similar audience sizes as 2022. With mid-year changes on the platform, there was a significant decrease in reach — from an average of 15,000 – 20,000 accounts earlier in the year down to approximately 5,000 – 8,000 at the end of the year. There was an exodus of followers after the rebrand to X during the summer. Numbers have rebounded, and now, at the end of the year, AAC has 1,070 followers (2022 = 1,039, 2021 = 767).

@AACyeg



1,070
followers

1,039 in 2022 and
767 in 2021



facebook.com/
AACyeg



971 followers
in 2022 to over
1,200 in
2023

At the end of 2023, AAC was reaching 8,000 people per month. The AAC has had strong comment threads, and many posts with more than 100 likes. The average engagement rate is typically around 10 per cent. Facebook continues to be a useful space to introduce concepts and to start opening people's minds and hearts to the necessities and realities of accessibility.





CONTACT US

Website

edmonton.ca/accessibility

Email

accessibility@edmonton.ca



facebook.com/AACyeg



[@AACyeg](https://twitter.com/AACyeg)

The Edmonton logo, featuring the word 'Edmonton' in a white, sans-serif font inside a blue square.

Edmonton