

**aac** | 

**ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT

**2022**





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## A MESSAGE FROM HIS WORSHIP, MAYOR AMARJEET SOHI

On behalf of City Council and the people of Edmonton, greetings to the readers of the Accessibility Advisory Committee's annual report!

In December of last year, City Council passed a budget that will make life better for all Edmontonians. Our priorities for the next four years include delivering the core services that are important to residents, while ensuring that we consider each service through an accessibility lens.

Council relies on the teams within the Social Development Branch to work with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to plan and implement ideas to create a more accessible city. Their current initiatives involve ensuring the Vehicle for Hire program encompasses all needs, partaking in important accessible housing conversations and connecting the entire community through social media engagement. When all Edmontonians are involved in community building, we can create a more vibrant and inclusive city for everyone.

I commend the members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee for helping us envision thriving communities that are made for people of all abilities, and look forward to continuing and advancing this work to its full potential.

Let's keep working together to build an Edmonton for all of us.

*A. Sohi*

**Amarjeet Sohi**  
*Mayor, City of Edmonton*





## REPORT FROM THE CHAIR, TONIA LARIVIERE

As Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of our members, each member brings diverse experiences with a common goal in mind, to improve accessibility for all who live and visit our city.

In 2022, we had to fill seven committee seats! My first question was, "What are we doing wrong?" We were assured past members left for personal reasons; family, advancements in careers, or their six-year term came to an end. These goodbye's were difficult; their contributions to this committee helped advance accessibility in our city, and we will all benefit from that. I will be forever grateful for their guidance, teachings and friendships.

We welcomed seven new members to our committee; from day one, it was like they had been on this committee for years! We share diverse experiences, strengths and vulnerabilities, which make us a stronger committee as we work together. The AAC receives tremendous support from city administration; our interests are theirs, and the needle moves on accessibility in our city with their support, thank you!

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

It was an exciting year, in March we joined forces with the Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton (WAVE) and brought together a delegation that represented various disabilities and the senior perspective; we spoke to City Council with our concerns about rider safety when using a taxi. Two motions were put forward, one that will support enhanced accessibility training for all drivers, and another that supported AAC and WAVE involvement in consultation on the VFH 2022/23 workplan. We were thrilled, this has been a concern for the committee for nine years. We are continuing to meet with Vehicle for Hire as they implement processes and driver training. We will continue to advise on this work to see this extended to all transportation services within the city's jurisdiction. Edmontonians will be safer for it.

We spoke at the budget hearings in favour of Enhanced Snow and Ice Control Service Standards, the Sidewalk Maintenance Strategy, permanent funding for On-Demand transit service, Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention and the Community Investment Operating Grant.



You will see our work in this report for 2022; we will continue to focus on snow and ice control, a stable and reliable para-transit network, safety and equity for those who experience disabilities, community engagement and learning within an intersectional lens.

Our primary concern is affordable and accessible housing. While affordable housing is a national crisis, legislation is not addressing a fundamental component of housing - it needs to be suitable, accessible and available to and for everyone. The city conducted an Affordable Housing Needs Assessment Study and determined a pervasive need for accessible housing, it is time to implement policies and regulations to address this need.

We understand that accessibility means different things depending on needs, and we can appreciate that this may feel complex. As long as housing continues to be built as it is today, barriers are being built into our system at ground level — with intention. This alone adds tremendous

strain to our entire ecosystem, financially and morally. The current way of building housing as status quo is apathetic; it does not meet the basic fundamental needs of Edmontonians. This committee believes we have the capacity to design better with intent and respect for all lives and stages of life.

Building “visitable” housing is the most basic, economical approach to Universal Design. While we recognize this is not a fully accessible dwelling or a universally designed home, it is a significant first step to supporting individual and community needs. We would like to see Edmonton become a leader in Alberta and mandate all new residential developments be built “visitable” We will continue to advance the conversations and support actions to see housing equity in our city.

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





## 2022 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Reappointments

- Kassi Boyd
- Carleen Brenneis
- Sheri Klassen
- Patricia Kocon
- Tonia LaRiviere
- Illara Stefaniuk-Gaudet
- Marcy Vautour
- Zachary Weeks

### New Appointments

- Dana Antaya-Moore
- David Achuroa
- Bobbi Belsek
- Marie Dancsok
- Douglas Rudolph
- Patrica Rzechowka
- Cynthia Sneedon

### Outgoing Members

- Susan Amer
- Jaime Caza
- Crystal Jones
- Jason Pisesky
- Paige Reeves
- Tracey Rice
- Nadeem Sunderji



You're missing  
out on  
**25% of your market**



25% of Canadians report having a disability and yet the majority of homes built are inaccessible



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

### Overview of the 2022 Accomplishments

- Developed and shared an accessibility presentation with City Hall School
- Developed and shared an accessibility presentation with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Developed and shared the 'Accessible Festivals and Events Guide' with the large Festival organisers in Edmonton
- Created an action calendar for National AccessAbility Awareness Week
- Support of International Day of Persons with Disabilities event
- Engaged a third party social media provider to increase community engagement through social media
- Development of a yearly thematic social media calendar to be informed on current accessible issues
- Letter sent to community about Snow and Ice Control feedback opportunities
- Letter sent to community about Vehicle for Hire Annual Report
- Letter of support sent for the #essentialbutforgotten campaign for wage increases for personal support/ care workers
- Letter of support for Barrier Free Alberta supporting accessibility legislation in Alberta
- Members featured in an e-scooter news piece
- Letter to community supporting reindexing of AISH payments
- Letter to community supporting Federal Bill C-22, Canada Disability Benefit



## POLICY REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

### Overview of the 2022 Accomplishments

- Met with the Cities 'Shovel Ready Group' of non-profit affordable housing providers
- Went on a group tour of the CIVIDA Londonderry affordable housing site
- Continued advocacy around increasing accessible housing in Edmonton, with particular focus on the need for housing that is both accessible and affordable.
- Continued advocacy around accessible taxis working with the Vehicle for Hire department to implement accessibility training for all drivers – ongoing
- Continued our involvement in Policy C602 implementation across departments
- Advised on changes to the Snow and Ice control policy – advocating for more efficient and effective removal of snow from City streets and sidewalks as well as implementation of support for those residents who are unable to remove snow themselves
- Members participated in the Policy C529 Review – Immigration and Settlement Policy
- Met with Edmonton Transit regarding audible outages on buses
- Provided advice on Millwoods Transit Centre Pride Walk
- Housing Infographics developed for public education





## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES POLICY C602

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 first three-year plan was endorsed by the City Executive leadership team in June of 2021. The implementation of the associated 70 actions has commenced. To date, 19 actions have been completed and 44 are in progress. Some highlights include: an inclusive playground with Jumpstart at the Clareview Recreation facility; Serenity spot at the Boyle Street Plaza playground, offering space for quiet play; handrails being installed in City Council Council Chambers; Universal Design reviews on development applications for private developers; a new pool pod (lift) at Confederation Leisure Center; a new change room lift at the Meadows

Recreation Center; and an elevator, a ramp to the patio, and an accessible washroom were added to Victoria Golf Course Clubhouse.

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





## 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 organisations plan events throughout the week of May 29<sup>th</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

### International Day of Disabled Persons (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 Disabled Persons, 3 December, aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilise 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.

### Accessible Parking Awareness

The Accessibility Advisory Committee took on a focussed social media campaign to spread awareness year round. Collaborating with the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Service and other community groups to raise awareness of 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 1400 hours to committee work in 2022.

### Guests Attending Monthly AAC meetings

#### Presenters (General meeting)

- January — Snow and Ice Control — Aurea Simms, Andrew Grant, S.Ozurt
- February — IIS Update on Policy C602 Corporate Actions — Suzanne Young/Yogi Subramonian
- March — Strategic Planning/Elections
- April — IIS Update on Policy C602 Corporate Actions Part II — Suzanne Young
- May — LRT Valleyline SW Safety Presentation — M.Ponich, L.Bar, J.Molora
- June — Affordable Housing Presentation — CMHA Housing Needs Assessment — E.Black, A.Osman
- July — Dialogue Partners presenting City of Edmonton Budget Process — M.Kolenc  
Indigenous Practises Presentation — Nadine Chalofoux
- August — Summer break
- September — Office of the City Clerk's Presented on their Role and Governance Review — M.Everett, C.McLuckie
- October — Vehicle for Hire Presented on Driver Training Curriculum — N.Djokic
- November — CoE Sidewalk Repair Strategy — A.Belous, R.Josen, M.Hamayeli
- December — Comedy Presentation from two Comics from the disability community, Erin Novakowski, Ashley T.





## NETWORKING

### Conferences/Meetings Attended by Committee Members

- May 15 — Members participated in a TransEd in person LRT safety Open House.
- May 26 — AAC Members met with the Cities 'Shovel Ready' group of non-profit affordable housing providers
- June — Two members participated in the Pacific Rim Conference — online version
- June 3 & 26 — Temporary Ramp prototype testing. (Zach)
- June — Members participated in the John Humphreys/Radical Inclusion accessible transportation conversations
- October 18 — Two members attended the Interagency Committee for Inclusive Recreation (Tonia/Dana)
- November 7 — Members toured the CIVIDA Londonderry affordable housing site.

### Presentations done by Committee Members

- January 19 — Centre for Race and Culture — Ableism, Accessibility & Advocacy (Zach moderated)
- June 24 — Members presented to the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues on Accessibility.
- October 28 presentations to City Hall School (Sheri, Bobbi)
- November 2 — Presented Accessible Festival and Events Guide to the Major Festival Event providers in Edmonton.



## NETWORKING

### Council Meetings — AAC Speaking to Council

- February — Chair spoke to Community and Public Service Committee in response to the Sidewalk Repair Strategy
- March — Chair spoke to the AAC Membership Report
- March — AAC & WAVE jointly responded to the Vehicle for Hire Annual Report
- March 10 — Members met with Councillor Cartmell
- April 13 — Chair presented the AAC Annual Report
- May — Chair spoke to the Community and Public Safety Report
- July 6 — AAC Members met with Councillor Tang about COVID restrictions
- November — Chair spoke to the Cities 4 year Operating/Capital Budget process at the Public Hearings.

From  
January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022  
there were

**2,537 parking tickets issued**

by the City of Edmonton to vehicles parked illegally in designated accessible parking stalls; an increase from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, which had 2053 tickets issued or the same violation.



## ACCESSIBLE PARKING AWARENESS

The Accessibility Advisory Committee took on a focused social media campaign to spread awareness year round. Collaborating with the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Service and other community groups to raise awareness of accessible parking stalls and their importance to the community.





# SOCIAL MEDIA



facebook.com/  
AACyeg

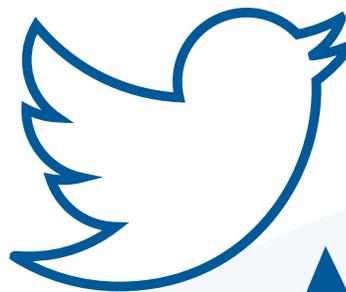


718 followers in  
2021 to **1,032**  
in **2022**

The AAC saw considerable growth in followers, but with changes to the platform, its users, and posting frequency, the engagement levels have not performed as well as the AAC may have hoped. This will continue to be evaluated to best meet the needs of the community.



@AACyeg



**1,011**  
followers

up from 767 in  
2021 to **1,011** in  
**2022**

An average month Twitter is reaching 15,000 to 20,000 people and has reached as high as **30,000 people.**

The AAC is regularly tagged by other people and organisations, giving good bilateral engagement.





## 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.





## CONTACT US

### Website

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