

## **AAC Strategic Planning 2023**

***Our city is enriched by the contributions of persons with disabilities.  
Our community is strengthened when everyone is included.***

**Background information:** The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) provides advice and recommendations to City Council about facilities and other infrastructure, programs, services, activities and policies. This aims to improve the City's livability, inclusiveness and accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

### **The Committee may:**

- Identify and engage stakeholder groups and seek their input into the Committee's work.
- Conduct research and prepare reports on effective mitigation or modification strategies (for matters within the Committee's mandate) that would help individuals with disabilities to more fully participate in the community.
- Examine City information regarding current City facilities and infrastructure, programs, public services, activities and policies, to identify where they could create issues or barriers for individuals with disabilities. At the City Manager's request and where confidentiality issues permit, proposals can be examined as well.
- Work with the City Manager to develop and maintain a dialogue about matters of concern to individuals with disabilities.
- Assist Council and the City Manager to develop strategies, programs and policies to attract, recruit and retain individuals with disabilities as employees and to serve on Council's committees or initiatives.
- Participate and support community events that raise awareness of inclusion and accessibility issues.

### **Vision**

Accessibility benefits everyone. We work fiercely towards an equitable city so everyone can belong.

**Mission Statement:** We commit to purposeful leadership to design a city that works for everyone. We encourage the collective efforts of the City of Edmonton, stakeholders, community members and ourselves, to make accessibility an integral part of the city-building process. We challenge the status quo and those who would defend it, and champion accessibility of all kinds as we create a more equitable Edmonton.

### **AAC Value Statements:**

**Creating Connections:** We believe in building reciprocal relationships with the City of Edmonton and the community at large — through mutual trust, accountability and transparency.

**Equity and Inclusion:** We strive to go beyond accessibility to work towards equity, culminating in belonging and meaningful inclusion for everyone.

**Removing Barriers:** We believe that barriers are multi-faceted, and that they may be attitudinal, systemic, physical, communication or technological in nature. True accessibility means removing all barriers for all people.

**Disability Definition for AAC purposes - AAC Disability Definition**

**There has been four pillars or areas of work that the AAC has organized its activities under:**

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 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.

**Priorities for 2023**

*The City Plan is an invitation to join in building a version of our city that respects and preserves the things we value today while also creating a city to attract and inspire its next million residents. The Accessibility Advisory Committee sees its work throughout the plan. 'Big City Moves', 'Shaping the City' and 'Planning for People' have particularly good alignment with AAC upcoming priorities.*

WORK AREAS/THEMES	ACTIONS
<b>TRANSPORTATION (Carry-over)</b>	
<b>Vehicle for Hire - UBER/Taxis</b>	Driving training program/Driver & Passenger Bill of Rights
	Increase accessible taxis/fare subsidy process
	UBER present
<b>Public Transit</b>	Awareness campaign focused on respectful behaviour on public transit regarding accessibility:
<b>Snow and Ice Control</b>	Determine a mechanism to get regular reporting about snow and ice control - may be similar to reporting to Business Improvement Areas
<b>ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING (Carry-over)</b>	
	Edmonton Affordable Housing Needs Assessment
	Follow the next rounds of housing grants
	Remain connected to the 'Shovel Ready Group'
	Assist CIVIDA with their Accessibility Framework
	Social Media/Public education campaign
	Follow Housing Registry initiatives (UofA & VAD)





**ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

	Identify areas for advocacy to be sent to Premier's Council in regards to housing and building code
	Improve accessibility of supportive housing, shelters and transitional housing
<b>CITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</b>	
	Respond as required
<b>CONNECTION WITH OTHER ADVOCACY GROUPS</b>	
	Premier's Council for People with Disabilities
	Voices of Albertans with Disabilities
	John Humphrey's Society - Human Rights
	End Poverty Edmonton
	Homeward Trust
	Annual Meeting of all the Advisory Committees
<b>COMMUNITY &amp; COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Advise City Council and City Administration</b>	Educate Council on definitions and the scope of disability, including ways to identify when a decision requires a disability lens or when it might impact accessibility
<b>Participate in and Support Events and Opportunities</b>	National AccessAbility Awareness Week
	National Disability Awareness Day
	notify City Council of these events and opportunities, encourage their participation
<b>Campaigns and Actions</b>	Awareness Campaigns - visitable housing/accessible parking
	Accessible Housing Tour Virtual/in person
	Visits to community
<b>Tools/Resource Development</b>	photo shoot
	Social Media
	Measure Up Tool for Community
	Tips for business



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

	Creation of videos and other shareable content along with other SISI groups
	Create methods of direct/accessible communication that the disability community can use to contact the AAC
	Create/publish/advise on online accessibility guides for social media, language, etc.
<b>Social Media content</b>	Continue to manage and update the AAC Social Media Theme Calendar
<b>Collaborations/Partnership Opportunities</b>	City Hall School
	Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues



**AAC 2023 CORE WORK AREAS - ACCEPTED AS ONGOING**

<b>WORK AREAS/THEMES</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>AAC BOARD DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>AAC Internal Policies</b>	Operating Policy and Procedures
	AAC internal evaluation processes
	Disability Definitions - Mental Health and Addictions
	Conference and Training Policy
	AAC internal evaluation processes
	Google Group/Shared Folder/Communication
	Ensure the lens of mental illness and addiction is included in all of AAC's advocacy/actions/advisory work/communication
<b>Training Opportunities</b>	GBA+ as it relates to City Council Reports
	Indigenous Knowledge
	Municipal Government
	In Depth Policy Development
	Alberta Building Codes - David Flannigan, City Safety Inspector
	Disability/Intersectionality
	Service Dog Licensing accessibility bylaw
	Accessibility and homelessness/mental health/additions
<b>ADVISE CITY COUNCIL AND CITY ADMINISTRATION ON POLICIES</b>	





**ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
*Note: The AAC only advises City Council*

<p><b>Policy C602 - Corporate Actions Updated In 2024</b></p>	<p>Advocate for improvements from the building codes</p>
<p><i>Note: Based on the presentation from the Integrated Infrastructure Section (April 2022) - the following suggestions were made for the AAC to consider</i></p>	<p>Advocate for a Provincial Accessibility Act/Legislation</p>
	<p>Bringing best practices forward from other jurisdictions</p>
	<p>Identifying issues that are in scope for City Projects</p>
	<p>Encourage private organizations to consider accessibility</p>
	<p>Review city policies as it relates to accessibility</p>



# How we Define and Talk About Disability

## Definition of Disability

As a committee we draw upon a social-relational model of disability<sup>1</sup>. This means....

- a. Disability is/can be experienced in the body through a variety of sensations and feelings
- b. Disability is/can be experienced when people with disabilities are treated differently than those without disabilities and are devalued
- c. People experience disability when they encounter barriers to participation because of restrictions in their environment (attitudes of others, physical inaccessibility, etc.)

## Definition of Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the absence of barriers that prevent individuals and/or groups from fully participating, contributing and benefiting from all social, economic, cultural, spiritual and political aspects of society. The term also refers to rights to access, and to universal design characteristics of products, devices, information, programs, services, infrastructure that enable independent use, or support when required, and access by people with a variety of disabilities.

## A Statement on Language

We acknowledge the importance and power of language. The language people use to describe their experience of disability is both personal and political. Language is also contextual and dynamic. This means that people might change the language they use over time. They may also use different languages in different spaces. We have chosen as a committee to use a mix of language that reflects our recognition that there are many ways of speaking about disability. We feel every individual who experiences disability should be free to use the language they identify with. That said, we do not condone the use of outdated or derogatory language including, but not limited to, the use of words such as ‘handicapped’, ‘retarded’, or ‘insane’.

**See below** for a summary of some of the most common language used to describe disability<sup>2</sup>.

Language	Description/Rationale
<i>Person with a disability</i>	Person-first language (e.g. I am a person with a disability) separates the person from their disability. Underpinning this language is a recognition that the person is not defined by their disability, that they are a <i>person first</i> , and

<sup>1</sup> The social-relational model of disability is elaborated upon by several disability studies scholars including Thomas Shakespeare and Carol Thomas.

<sup>2</sup> Chart contents adapted from:

Peers, D., Spencer-Cavaliere, N., & Eales, L. (2014). Say What You Mean: Rethinking Disability Language in Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 31(3), 265–282. doi:10.1123/apaq.2013-0091

	as such should be treated with the same dignity and respect as any other person. This language emerged from disability rights movements beginning in the 1970s. This description of disability is widely accepted in Canada and is a strong choice if you are unsure of what language to use.
<i>Disabled person</i>	The use of <i>disabled person</i> seeks to emphasize the ways the environment disables people. It suggests that the disability does not reside within the individual, but instead is caused by interactions with various barriers in the social, physical, and institutional environments. For example, a person is <i>disabled by</i> inaccessible spaces or discriminatory attitudes.
<i>Person who identifies as...</i>	This wording creates space for an individual to self-identify in whatever way feels best to them. It acknowledges the diversity in disability experiences and identities and creates space for people to change how they identify over time. For example: “my friend identifies as a queer disabled woman of color” or “my colleague identifies as crip”.
<i>Person who experiences disability</i>	This wording acknowledges the wide array of ways disability can be and is experienced. It is an open and respectful term that recognizes that disability can be both imposed on a person by barriers in their environment, but also felt within a person’s body.
<i>Identity based language (e.g. Mad, Crip, Autistic)</i>	Identity based descriptions are a reclaiming of words once used in derogatory ways. Identity based language choices emerge from activist groups. They emphasize that what others call 'disability' is not a disability at all but instead a part of human variation. They understand human variation not as something to be ashamed of, but instead something to be proud of, something integral to their identity. Examples of identity based language include: Crip, Mad, or Autistic. This language does not describe everyone’s experience and may be insulting to some. Non disabled people should only use this language if they know the person identifies this way.