

### Accessibility Advisory Committee - 2024 Annual Report

#### Message from the Chair

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of each committee member; all bring diverse knowledge and experience to the table with the common goal of improving accessibility for all who live and visit our city.

We were pleased to see more advancements in accessibility in 2024. Our long-standing priorities of affordable and accessible housing, snow and ice control, transportation, and a reliable para-transit system remained the same.

We spoke at the spring 2024 budget deliberations with the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues in support of an Assisted Snow Shovelling Pilot, which was approved and launched. This will assist those who do not have the support and ability to meet the city standards of snow removal on residential sidewalks, have access to safe walkways, and avoid penalties.

We have continued to correspond with Vehicle for Hire (VFH). In June of 2023, City Council voted to amend the VFH bylaws to mandate training for all VFH drivers; the training is aimed to standardize driver knowledge of accessibility, customer service and safety, and bylaws and driver requirements. Thank you to all who have contributed to that work! There is still a lack of accessible vehicles on the roads; as part of the work plan for 2025-26, VFH will be seeking stakeholder feedback to inform the degree to which administration should regulate, incentive, subsidize, and/ or operate Vehicle For Hire services where gaps in service exist. Of course, we will continue to advise on the essential need for incentives and/or subsidies to get more accessible vehicles on the road.

In 2019, City Council passed Policy C602, Accessibility for People With Disabilities. We met regularly with the Co-chairs of the Corporate Accessibility Committee and had the opportunity to provide input on the next round of corporate actions for the 2025-29 action plan; public engagement will be in March 2025, and we encourage all to participate.

Accessible housing will always be a key priority for this committee - we continue to meet with administration and stakeholders of city-owned housing programs, as these fall into the municipal jurisdiction. The primary concern is accessibility standards are not defined, nor do they need to be enforced; that said, we are seeing a will and improvements to some city-owned housing developments.

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, and the Office of the City Clerk for their support and guidance.

Thank you to our Council Representatives, Councillor Keren Tang, and Councillor Jo-Anne Wright; we are thankful for their guidance and contributions. Councillor Tang will continue to fill the role, and we are grateful.

It is a privilege to be a member of the AAC; this is my last year as Chair, as I have met the term limit. Chairing this committee has been the most rewarding professional experience to date. I am so grateful for all I have learned and the friendships that developed along the way - together, we are removing barriers. Thank you to everyone who has respected our collective advisory voice and responded in kind and progress.

### **Purpose of the Annual Report**

This annual report has been developed to meet the requirements of Bylaw 18156 - Council Committees Bylaw, which sets out the annual reporting requirements for Council Committees. Under Bylaw 18156, all Council Committees will:

- Report to Council at least annually.
- Approve a work plan that aligns with Council's strategic objectives and the Council Committee's mandate, including a reporting of what resources were provided in the previous year and the anticipated resource requirements for the upcoming year.
- During its annual report to Council, present the work plan as well as a summary of the status of the previous year's work plan.

### **Mandate of Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)**

The mandate of AAC is to provide advice and recommendations to Council about facilities and other infrastructure, programs, services, activities and policies, for the purpose of improving the City's liveability, inclusiveness and accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Report on 2024 Work Plan Goals and Accomplishments

<p><b>Goal 1</b></p>	<p>Transportation - To support a mobility system that provides different ways to move around the City and evolves as the City evolves</p>
<p><b>Key Results</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provided feedback on the 'LRT Communication Tools on Safety' Presentation - Roberta Farion/Julia Molaro</li> <li>● Valley Line LRT and Snow Removal on Platforms - Letter to Council</li> <li>● CBC Interview re: e-bikes/e-scooters</li> <li>● Assisted Snow Removal Program - consulted</li> <li>● Valley Line West LRV Seating arrangements at Policy Sub Committee</li> <li>● City of Edmonton Service Dog Guidelines Presentation - Chad Nelson</li> <li>● Review the 'Rider Experience on Paratransit' Report - letter sent to Council</li> <li>● Arc Card Tapless Exemption Presentation - Vicki Gudelj</li> <li>● E-Park New App - letter to Parking Services regarding lack of information about 2 hour courtesy parking available to placard holders</li> <li>● The AAC collects Accessible Parking Placard data for Edmonton, as well as enforcement of Accessible Parking ticketed infractions year over year. The situation is not improving. 2024 Enforcement Teams wrote 4,046 tickets, up from 3,006 in 2023.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary of Progress</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Vehicle for Hire Section currently shares updates with key stakeholders like the AAC through a quarterly newsletter. All revised driver education curriculum has been completed and is to be implemented by April 2025.</li> <li>● Vehicle for Hire will be invited to come and discuss their next workplan activity around fare reviews with the AAC in 2025.</li> <li>● AAC engaged in issues around LRT Platform Snow Removal practices.</li> <li>● AAC will review 2024 data on Disabled Parking Placards issues; Accessible Parking stall ticket violations; parking stall requirements, etc.</li> <li>● AAC engaged with parking services as the new app does not indicate that Disabled Parking Placard Holders may park for free for the first 2 hours in City of Edmonton metered parking spots.</li> <li>● AAC consulted with Edmonton Transit Services on 'tapless exemptions' for people who are not physically able to tap the Arc</li> </ul>

	<p>Card.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC is monitoring Edmonton Transit Services initiatives around the new practice of blue curb paint at Transit Centres.</li> <li>• A member of the Edmonton Transit Service Advisory Board has been regularly attending the AAC Meetings.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Goal 2</b></p>	<p>Accessible Housing - Nobody is in core housing need</p>
<p><b>Key Results</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority Growth Areas - Jordan McAurther at Policy Review Sub-Committee</li> <li>• Amnesty International, 'Housing Is a Human Right' Panel discussion - Tonia as a panelist</li> <li>• Housing Task Force Letter sent to Council</li> <li>• Excel Society at Community Engagement - Tyler North</li> <li>• Affordable Housing Guidebook - Affordable Housing Plan - Rionel Comia/Scott Ashe/Carleen Etmanski/Lara Pinchbeck</li> <li>• Community Safety and Well Being Pillars - Wesley Andreas/Kelta Coomber</li> <li>• Policy C601 - Affordable Housing Policy Engagement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary of Progress</b></p>	<p>The AAC sent a letter to Council indicating the ways the City can impact affordable/accessible housing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative that offers incentives for builders to build accessible properties.</li> <li>2. Through the City's Affordable Housing Tax Grant (approved January 2023). Offer further tax incentives to developers who prioritize accessibility/affordability beyond minimum standards.</li> <li>3. Create a consolidated list of resources and educational opportunities for developers (both market and non-market) to use to build their understanding of the benefit of, and need for accessible/affordable housing; and how to achieve accessible buildings.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Clear definitions of what makes a home/unit accessible.</li> <li>b. Breakdown resistance to new design approaches.</li> <li>c. Support knowledge building around accessibility.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Use the City's communications channels to build Edmontonians' understanding of the value of accessible/affordable housing, not just for the disability community but for everyone.</li> <li>5. Through the Affordable Housing Investment Program, continue to prioritize accessibility in the construction grants for non-market housing providers. In city-led Affordable Housing</li> </ol>

	<p>Projects, the City should lead by surpassing minimum accessible unit requirements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Use the City's influence to advocate for Provincial Accessibility Legislation to improve regulatory requirements.</li> <li>7. Create (or in partnership) a centralized system that would help in determining accessible housing supply and demand, while streamlining the housing process.</li> </ol> <p>AAC Members participated in the Affordable Housing Sections Engagement sessions on Policy C601 - Affordable Housing.</p>
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<p><b>Goal 3</b></p>	<p>Policy C602: Corporate Accessibility Policy &amp; Corporate Actions - To create a culture of acceptance and inclusion to enable full participation of Edmontonians.</p>
<p><b>Key Results</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Policy C602 Accessibility for People with Disabilities Final Report for 2021- 2024 - Yogi Subramonian/Heather Craig</li> <li>● C602 Public Engagement Session- Yogi Subramonian/Heather Craig</li> <li>● C602 Accessibility for People with Disabilities - Final Report/What We Heard Report</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary of Progress</b></p>	<p>The AAC continues to be involved in updates, public engagement and 'What We Heard' Reports related to the City's Policy C602 Corporate Accessibility Policy and the upcoming Corporate Actions related to the Policy. This is a key policy and actions to improve accessibility for all Edmontonians through internal actions at the City of Edmonton.</p>

<p><b>Goal 4</b></p>	<p>Community Engagement: To intentionally interact with members of the disability community through partnerships; listening to individuals and through research communities.</p>
<p><b>Key Results</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Disability Advocates Office and Voices for Albertans with Disabilities provided a presentation on their respective roles in advocacy for people with disabilities.</li> <li>● Gateway Association @ Community Engagement - Jamie Thiessen</li> <li>● Ryan Popplestone/Greg McMeekin - Office of the Provincial Advocate for People with Disabilities</li> <li>● Interagency for Inclusive Recreation Meeting (February/June/November)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Excel Society at Community Engagement - Tyler North</li> <li>● AAC Annual Report Shared with the disability community</li> <li>● Treat Accessibly - promoted and attended by members</li> <li>● Barrier Free Alberta Rally - promoted and attended by members</li> <li>● International Day of Persons with Disabilities, NDP Caucus Reception - promoted and attended by members</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary of Progress</b></p>	<p>The AAC was successful in hosting meetings that included key members of the disability advocacy community to glean understanding of each other's priorities and roles. In addition, community organizations were invited for informal presentation and information sharing to build connection and understanding. One large communication was sent out in 2024 sharing the work of the AAC. AAC has maintained three social media channels (X (1,003 followers), Facebook (1,315 followers) and Instagram (315 followers) in 2024.</p>

In addition, the following was also completed by AAC:

- Indigenous Allyship Training with Bent Arrow Healing Society (9 members participated)
- Mayor's Dinner and Fall Budget Adjustments (2 members participated)
- Community Safety and Well Being discussion and feedback - Main Meeting
- Presentation from Commonwealth Stadium Rehabilitation Project Team as well as the Holyrood Supportive Housing Project Team. These presentations were part of the agreed list of projects with the Integrated Infrastructure Services Section for the current Capital Budget Cycle.

2024 Meeting Summary – Key Topics and Motions Meeting Summary

Meeting	Summary - Key Topics and Motions
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Disability Advocates Office and Voices for Albertans with Disabilities provided a presentation on their respective roles in advocacy for people with disabilities.</li> <li>● 'Accessible Meeting and Events Guide' was circulated to Council.</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● LRT Communication Tools on Safety Presentation - Roberta Farion/Julia Molaro</li> <li>● Valley Line LRT and Snow Removal on Platforms - Letter to Council</li> <li>● Public Engagement Accessible Actions - Maral Hamayell/Olivia Howard/Jody Wood</li> <li>● Strategic Planning/Workplan/Review work.</li> <li>● Public Spaces Bylaw - Wrote/spoke at Public Hearings to Council</li> <li>● MapMission Day with Access Now - March 24, 2024</li> <li>● Indigenous Teachings &amp; Allyship - Bent Arrow Feb 10</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commonwealth Stadium Rehabilitation Presentation</li> <li>● Executive Elections</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Old Strathcona Public Realm Presentation</li> <li>● Warehouse Park Presentation - Pavilion Feedback</li> <li>● Gateway Association @ Community Engagement - Jamie Theissen</li> <li>● AAC Annual Report shared with the disability community</li> <li>● City of Edmonton Service Dog Guidelines Presentation - Chad Nelson</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ryan Popplestone/Greg McMeekin - Office of the Provincial Advocate for People with Disabilities</li> <li>● Universal Design - Janes Walk May 3rd</li> <li>● CNIB Presenting to Community Engagement</li> <li>● Priority Growth Areas - Jordan McAurther at Policy</li> <li>● CBC Interview re: e-bikes/e-scooters</li> <li>● Housing Is A Human Right Panel discussion - Tonia as a panelist</li> <li>● Housing Task Force Letter sent to Council</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Policy C602 Accessibility for People with Disabilities - Yogi Subramonian/Heather Craig</li> <li>● Atlas - With Us - Tonia with Clr. Tang</li> <li>● LRV Seating arrangements at Policy Review Sub-Committee</li> <li>● Interagency for Inclusive Recreation Meeting</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Excel Society at Community Engagement - Tyler North</li> <li>● Assisted Snow Removal Program</li> </ul>

## Attachment 1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● C602 Public Engagement - Yogi Subramonian/Heather Craig</li> </ul>
August	Summer Break
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Affordable Housing Guidebook - Affordable Housing Plan - Rionel Comia/Scott Ashe/Carleen Etmanski/Lara Pinchbeck</li> <li>● Review the 'Rider Experience on Paratransit' Report - letter sent to Council</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community Safety and Well Being Pillars - Wesley Andreas/Kelta Coomber</li> <li>● Assisted Snow Removal Program Launched</li> <li>● Single Use Item Bylaw - letter sent to Council</li> <li>● Treat Accessibly - promoted and attended by members</li> <li>● Arc Card Tapless Exemption Presentation - Vicki Gudelj</li> <li>● E-Park New App - letter to Parking Service</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● C602 Accessibility for People with Disabilities - Final Report/What We Heard Report</li> <li>● Waste Services Single use Item bylaw - Daniel Kielback</li> <li>● Mayor's Dinner - budget conversation Tonia/Dana attended November 22nd.</li> <li>● Interagency for Inclusive Recreation Meeting</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social Gathering</li> <li>● Workplan Review and Priorities for 2025</li> </ul>



## Membership and Appointment Information

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) 2024-25 Membership List			
Name	Appointed	Term Ends	Max Term
David Achuroa	May 1, 2022	Apr 30, 2026	2030
Dana Antaya-Moore - Vice-Chair	May 1, 2022	Apr 30, 2026	2030
Bobbi Belsek	May 1, 2022	Apr 30, 2026	2030
Carleen Brenneis	May 25, 2020	Apr 30, 2026	2028
Marie Dancsok	May 1, 2022	Apr 30, 2026	2030
Karima Ewig	May 1, 2023	Apr 30, 2026	2031
Tonia LaRiviere - Chair	May 1, 2018	Apr 30, 2026	2026
Samantha Mason	May 1, 2023	Apr 30, 2026	2031
Douglas Rudolph	May 1, 2022	Apr 30, 2026	2030
Katie Thomas	May 1, 2022	Apr 30, 2026	2030
Zachary Weeks - Vice-Chair	May 1, 2021	Apr 30, 2026	2029

## Reports and Communications

### Reports by AAC to Council:

1. No Reports were submitted.

### Correspondence submitted to Council:

1. January 2024 - 'Accessible Meeting and Events Guide' shared with Council
2. February 2024 - Public Spaces Bylaw - Letter and spoke at the City Council Non-Statutory Public Hearing
3. May 2024 - 'Accessible and Affordable Housing' Letter to Council
4. September 2024 - DATS Rider Support Letter to Council
5. October 2024 - 'Single Use Bylaw' Letter to Council

AAC requests to speak to a Standing Committee of Council:

1. Public Spaces Bylaw - Public Hearing Feb 2024

**Concluding Remarks**

In 2022, we participated in a professional strategic planning and priority-setting session, which has proven very beneficial for the committee. With support from administration, we maintained our focus on those long-term priority issues that align with council priorities while addressing short-term concerns as well. Councillor Tang and Councillor Wright alerted us to items relevant to the committee, which we responded to via letter or by speaking to council. We welcomed guests from the city who shared the work of their departments; all respected our questions and advice; we participated in robust conversations, and each meeting ended with an open-door policy should we have further questions, concerns, or recommendations.

The AAC has deep concerns regarding the administrative support the AAC and other equity-seeking groups will receive with the new structure change, resulting in a deficit of support and progress for this committee. We understand Council has difficult economic decisions to make, and change is required; however, the AAC will receive reduced support than previously. We can not understate the importance of that administrative role to a committee that represents an underrepresented community. In addition to this internal structure change, the AAC has a greatly reduced social media budget. In a time where we feel our role has moved from advocacy to advisory, this is a significant setback. To ensure that AAC members give the best advice to Council, equity-deserving groups must receive appropriate administrative support.