

CITY POLICY



POLICY NUMBER: C602

REFERENCE:

ADOPTED BY:

City Council **This date will be added when Council approves amendment**

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: 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).

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

- Identification, removal, and prevention of attitudinal, systemic, physical, communication and technology barriers. The City of Edmonton acknowledges that individuals have multiple identity factors that intersect and will affect how diverse groups of people experience barriers and accessibility.
- As an employer, ensuring people with disabilities have access to employee services including employment opportunities within the corporation and employment policies and practices that facilitate reasonable accommodation for qualified applicants and current employees.
- As a funder, having organizations pursue the spirit and intent of the policy statements and principles where reasonable. This will be outlined in the grant parameters and defined in the funding agreements for:
 - Program and services;
 - Affordable housing; and
 - Community group led redevelopments and new construction projects.
- As a model, encouraging businesses, institutions, organizations, and community groups to incorporate accessibility and universal design in their policies, goods, programs and services, communications and technology, and infrastructure.

The City of Edmonton is committed to pursuing these objectives through reasonable efforts on a go forward basis and within appropriate resource, budgetary, financial and other applicable parameters.

Principles

The City of Edmonton has aligned with accessibility principles contained within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the new Accessible Canada Act. These principles acknowledge that barriers to accessibility are the basis of inequality between people with and without disabilities and are meant to:

- Promote, protect and ensure equitable enjoyment of all rights and freedoms; and
- Respect for the inherent dignity of people with disabilities.

The City of Edmonton is committed to the internationally recognized principles of Universal Design, which are founded on the philosophy that accessibility is a fundamental condition of good design. An environment, program, service, engagement, communication, and technology that is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, benefits everyone. The seven principles include:

- Equitable Use: useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
- Flexibility in Use: accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- Simple and Intuitive Use: easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
- Perceptible Information: communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- Tolerance for Error: minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- Low Physical Effort: can be used efficiently and comfortably with minimal fatigue.
- Size and Space for Approach and Use: Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use.

Definitions:

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.

Barrier

Means anything, including any attitudinal, systemic, physical, communication and technology barrier; anything that is the result of a policy or a practice that hinders the full and equitable participation in society of persons with a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

- Attitudinal barriers are behaviours, perceptions, and assumptions that discriminate against persons with disabilities. These barriers often emerge from a lack of understanding, which can lead people to ignore, to judge, or have misconceptions about a person with a disability.
- Communications barriers occur when sensory disabilities, such as hearing, seeing, or learning disabilities, have not been considered. These barriers relate to both the sending and receiving of information.
- Physical barriers are obstacles that make it difficult for some to easily access a place. These include elements of buildings or outdoor spaces that create barriers to persons with disabilities.
- Systemic barriers are policies, procedures, or practices that unfairly discriminate and can prevent individuals from participating fully in a situation. Systemic barriers are often put into place unintentionally.
- Technology barriers occur when a device or technological platform is not accessible to its intended audience and cannot be used with an assistive device. Technology can enhance the user experience, but it can also create unintentional barriers for some users. Technology barriers are often related to information and communications barriers.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is any individual or group activity addressing issues of public interest or concern, with the goal to address the public interest or concerns and promote the quality of the community. Civic engagement ensures equitable access, participation and ability to contribute in Council meetings, Committee meetings, and public hearings. Civic engagement includes public engagement which creates opportunities for people to contribute to decision making by City Council and Administration about the City's policies, programs, projects, and services, and communicates how public input is collected and used.

Communications and Technology

The practice of receiving, exchanging, interpreting and transmitting information including verbal, print, audio, video, websites, web applications, and web content, and other digital technologies.

Disability

Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations (World Health Organization).

Equitable

The fair and just treatment of all members of a community. Equity requires a commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect, and civility, as well as ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specific goals.

Infrastructure

All City owned and occupied infrastructure including facilities, open spaces, and transportation in the public realm including:

- Facilities: all City of Edmonton owned and occupied buildings.
- Open Spaces: all City of Edmonton owned outdoor land (hard or soft surface) or water that is publicly accessible, including parks, trails, and other public spaces.
- Transportation: the City's system for taking people from one place to another including streets, paths of travel (sidewalks, pathways, bike lanes), parking and transit.

Programs

A program achieves goals and outcomes by delivering a collection of services.

Services

A service delivers valued and measurable outputs to recipients that contribute to the achievement of program goals which satisfy the needs of a target group or specific public need.

Reasonable accommodation

Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing an undue hardship, where needed in a particular case, to ensure people with disabilities have access and opportunities on an equitable basis with others.

Universal Design

Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of age, size or ability. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services, and environments that meet individual's needs.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed, at a minimum, every five years.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Guide the development and implementation of City policies, civic engagement, programs and services, communications and technology, employee services and infrastructure that considers individual needs and diverse abilities.
- Take steps towards ensuring people with disabilities are treated with respect and have equitable access and opportunity to participate and contribute to City policies, civic engagement, programs and services, communications and technology, employee services and infrastructure.