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Community Conversation

Hosted by the Advisory Board on Services for Persons with
Disabilities (ABSPD)

April 12, 2013

Final Report

Event Summary:

On Friday, April 12, 2013, over 100 individuals including people with disabilities, front line staff, board members, and executive directors of local disability organizations gathered at the Edmonton Expo Centre for a dynamic day of learning, sharing and networking. The day started with an introduction from Mayor Mandel and Louise Taylor, co-chair of the ABSPD. The General Manager from Community Services and representatives from City Council were also in attendance. Three speakers then shared information on what the City has to offer in terms of accessibility and inclusion in Employment (Mark Farr), Housing (Ed Jones) and Transportation (Margaret Dorey). These three topics were explored over the day as well as discussion in an open forum setting.

The main objective that guided the planning and delivery of the community conversation was for the Advisory Board on Services for Person with Disabilities (ABSPD) to gather input to help guide the work for their 2013 Strategic Plan.

The ABSPD 3 key objectives:

- An understanding of the needs of the community at large.
- To be clearly connected to the broad community through community engagement, information gathering and exchange.
- To be seen as a collaborative and collective voice to City Council for Edmontonians with disabilities.

As an advisory body on the status of persons with disabilities, the ABSPD undertakes a significant role in helping Council address the manner in which their strategies and policies affect people with disabilities in Edmonton.

Within each topic (Employment, Transportation, Housing and Open Forum), three main questions were discussed and explored: (Discussion Summaries and list of related Existing Resources to follow)

1. What is going well?
2. What can be done differently?
3. What would you recommend as something for the ABSPD to consider in their work plan?

Employment: Discussion Summary

Creating Opportunities

- Identify & protect positions and opportunities for people with disabilities
- Different ideas of possibilities and approaches to creating employment opportunities
- All departments need to foster an open culture to hiring people with disabilities
- Create meaningful employment.
- Advocate for pre-employment programs for people with disabilities so that they can prepare and take part in society's workforce.
- City Of Edmonton could create a breakdown of disabilities represented in the work force. Need to know if all disabilities are fairly represented.
- Don't admire the problem. Do something about it!
- Funding needs to be available for upgrading.
- Look at what other cities are doing.
- Undertake research on employees currently working
- Inclusion must be made a priority.
- Business Case needs to be developed
 - more taxes
 - reflect the community it represents
 - Good corporate decisions should be encouraged.
- Unions can be a barrier (i.e.: trades). Need to work at a policy level (even volunteers).
- Application process can be a barrier. It is about conversation and relationships.
- Educational Cliff - work with schools to assist with transition from school to employment. Needs to be relevant to age. How does it make them money and make them more efficient.
- Removing barriers to employment will/may reduce pressure of public funds such as AISH.

Promotion/Awareness

- Education and awareness for the private sector.
- Promoting 'success stories' (people thinking outside of the box). Need to hear more success stories through website and social media.
- Reduce myths (e.g. cost too much money & effort to employ people with disabilities).
- Increase awareness of inclusive employment opportunities within the City of Edmonton and the business community. Leadership needs to actively promote and demonstrate their commitment to inclusive employment.
- Increase employer awareness of D.R.E.S. (Disability Related Employee Support) funding and advocate for agencies playing a larger role in assessing and placing people through D.R.E.S.

- Facilitate dialogue (i.e. guidelines, implementation, best practices, and policies)
- Hold a series of meetings for 6 months, with direction from the Mayor.
- Advertisements need to include the disabled to raise awareness. Not just tokenism.
- Work with unions to discuss improving image and better PR.
- More information on mental illness.

Workplace Supports

- Suggestions included having a team support person in workplaces, increasing number of v-logs (better system for interpreters to relay info to deaf people).
- Grants needed
- Representation for the deaf community as the language and culture is different as is the barriers to employment.
- Creating a 'champion' within each department to foster success. On a micro level related to the client working on strengths of individuals.
- Having a disability policy
- Create best practices and be accountable.
- Not just physical supports (e.g. ramps), but job supports (i.e. job share, reduced work load) are needed.
- Assess employer to identify necessary supports (including involvement of employee).
- Need to have a foundation of knowledge based on each individual needs & adaption within city/dept to better/work towards successful employment for all.
- More internal training at places of employment
- Training is important, especially if a disability occurs later in life.
- Some individuals receive better training when integrated in the work force.
- Provide opportunities for employers to learn more about adaptive technique to learn and educate each other.
- Need culture of learning regarding how to support individuals with disabilities.

Collaboration

- - Relationship building is necessary as funding decreases. Increase collaboration with service providers and look at creative ways of support. Collaborate. Do not just consult. Lots of 'asking' is required to support needs of individuals
- Seek outside expertise to place individuals with disabilities into job opportunities
- Need more conversations with people with all disabilities and employers to better understand what they need and which barriers need to be removed.
- City of Edmonton needs to have more events like this symposium to gather information

- Initiate forums with the community & organizations to strategize ways to enhance employment and opportunities.
- Whatever model is developed can be shared with satellite communities.
- Need a cultural shift to discuss how agencies can work together in job development.
- Networking - monthly, in-service, action plans
- Getting the right people to events.
- A united front & cooperation is the key to success.

Incentives/Benefits of hiring people with disabilities

- Work to educate employers/businesses about the benefits/advantages of employing/hiring people with disabilities (e.g. low turnover).
- Provide incentives for employers (i.e. internships, scholarships, tax breaks [City] and benefits/gala, advertising, recognition).
- City, regional and provincial focus on the benefits of **all** people working.

Employment: Existing Supports

City of Edmonton Employment Outreach Team

The City of Edmonton has an Outreach team that works on leading various initiatives that attract and retain a diverse workforce reflective of the community we serve. The four communities that the Outreach team works within are the Disability, Aboriginal, Multicultural and Youth communities.

- The team aims to attract, retrain and develop a diverse, productive, engaged and talented workforce to meet business needs
- Employment outreach gives the organization an expanded ability to search for talent beyond traditional avenues

Through various initiatives, the Outreach Team is able to target diverse communities and facilitate connections between the City and its citizens. The Outreach Team provides meaningful information about career opportunities with the City of Edmonton and advice on how to overcome challenges in the hiring process. Efforts include:

- Internal education – employment outreach support and services available
- Participate on employment-related committees both internal and external
- Develop partnerships between internal work areas and government-funded employment agencies that focus on employment for persons with disabilities
- Create programs, initiatives and events to meet the needs of City departments and community interest in order to remove barriers for employment of persons with disabilities

The City as an employer is committed to Equal Opportunity where employment is based on personal capabilities and qualifications without discrimination. We strive for an open process that our citizens expect and that allows us to find the best person for the job.

For more information, contact the Disability Outreach Consultant at 780-496-2851.

Workforce Diversity Edmonton:

- Chrysalis offers personalized services designed to meet the needs of the individuals whom we serve while providing meaningful opportunities for growth and community inclusion. <http://chrysalis.ca/>
- Distinctive Employment Counselling Services of Alberta (DECSA) develops and provides services to assist individuals with employment barriers achieve paid and meaningful employment. <http://www.decsa.com/index.php>
- Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) provides assistance to Albertans in overcoming the barriers to employment created by their disability. <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/working-in-alberta/3159.html>
- Employabilities serves people with disabilities, barriers to employment and employers, and acted as a voice of community advocacy. <https://www.employabilities.ab.ca/>
- Excel Society is a non-profit organization that assists people to overcome barriers to employment and independent living. <http://www.excelociety.org/>
- Gateway Association is an organization that works with individuals who have developmental disabilities. The Association also works with the families of persons with disabilities. <http://www.gatewayassociation.ca/>
- Goodwill provides work opportunities and skill development to people who face employment barriers. <http://www.goodwill.ab.ca/>
- On Site Placement Services (OSP) is a non-profit and charitable organization that has been providing employment and skill development services in the Edmonton region since 1981 for persons with disabilities or chronic health barriers. <http://www.osp.ab.ca/>
- WORKink™ not only helps employers recruit and hire qualified candidates, but also helps employers retain employees through workplace accommodations and awareness training. <http://www.workink.com/>

Mayor's Award for Employers

This award honors employers, businesses or organizations that have provided opportunity and support for employment or volunteer positions for one or more persons with disabilities. http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/Mayors-Awards-information-brochure.pdf

City of Edmonton Administrative Procedure A1126 - Duty to Accommodate

- http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/A1126_Duty_to_Accommodate_Dir.pdf

- http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/A1126_Framework_Agreement.pdf

Respectful Workplace training:

A required course for all new employees to the City - The City of Edmonton is committed to ensuring respectful work environments where employees are:

- demonstrating respectful behaviors towards others
- able to resolve routine workplace conflicts
- supported when conflicts are unresolved
- able to commit full energies to work responsibilities
- motivated to consider The City of Edmonton as the employer of choice

“The Business Link”

A government sponsored not-for-profit organization in Edmonton that provides self-employment support: <http://www.canadabusiness.ab.ca/>

Measuring Up Resource Guide

pages 22 – 33 - <http://www.edmonton.ca/...ts/Measuring-Up-Resource-Guide.pdf>

Housing: Discussion Summary

Collaborations

- Increased collaboration between the City and community groups to make sure needs are met and there are opportunities to develop partnerships (for funding)
- Networking with other provinces – where there are success stories
- Connecting and communicating with private sector for all housing

Funding

- Subsidies & long term funding for housing need to be available
- Financial incentives for families to take people into their homes
- More options besides condos and more housing supports in place
- More money/funding for home repairs and adaptations
- More affordable housing (e.g. AISH)
- Need supports when hospitalized to keep rented housing (financial)

Universal Design

- More emphasis on universal design for everyone – help long-term and short-term
- Mixed housing and community amenities developed together (holistic approach). Advantage of mixed housing: having more supports/services within all communities
- Universal design education broadened to more groups. A Better understanding of Universal Design and terminology
- Housing closer to good transportation (i.e. LRT or major bus stops)
- Improve all housing (especially in older areas) – rezoning old areas – make sure change is made for all
- Incentives for builders to create accessible housing units (versus legislation possibly needed)
- With buildings that were built based on older building codes – should be required to make improvements that are based on new codes
- Understand Universal Design and other terminology and implications – Expand Universal Design Concept and cultural shift for all – make it a requirement for all new housing (as we will all need it sooner or later and this will fight Not in My Backyard (NIMBY))

Education/Awareness

- Need for central registry (better communication)– a place where people can walk in and get help to apply for housing as many people are unable to navigate the web or fill out the application

- Advocate for the City of Edmonton and create a one stop shop for city housing in City Hall or City Centre mall where people could be supported, as necessary, with the process of accessing city housing
- Education and Marketing of accessible housing (due to perceptions)
- Need cultural shift/education to make universal design principles a common standard i.e. Shower for all, curbless access
- Increased awareness and City building awareness

Other

- Mentorship for independence
- There are groups working towards physical supports for mental challenges
- Keep people out of hospital and in their own home
- “Deaf Child at play” neighborhood sign
- Focus on housing is still a priority for the city
- Need accessible/affordable student housing
- Need housing for families (to keep them together) more 3 and 4 bedroom units are needed to accommodate families.
- Need someone with the ability to find housing while still in hospital
- Need technology to give visual cues (e.g. doorbells, smoke detector, etc.) for all housing
- Need rent control – need limit on how much rent can be raised
- Develop list of best practices
- Shorten wait list for housing (5-6 years?) Years of backlog in hospitals with lack of housing and supports
- City needs to facilitate age-appropriate housing options for all disabilities
- Appreciation for all new forms of housing and supports but not enough housing accessible and affordable or enough forms of it and community resources and supports
- Need Age-friendly initiatives
- targeting private developers to build homes for life
- More accessible housing in rural settings – more options, affordable (location of housing – cannot go back to same community)
- Supported living opportunities in a high rise – Community network supports
- Variety of options and locations of adapted housing
- # of spaces available in group homes (lots of positive change)
- Co-ops – problem that subsidies only government till mortgage is paid off (hope for provincial help!)

Housing: Existing Supports

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity Canada affiliates select and prepare partner families for homeownership, manage the construction of Habitat homes, and hold partner family mortgages. They play a vital role at the local level by engaging community volunteers, securing resources, increasing the profile of Habitat for Humanity and raising awareness about the issue of affordable housing in their communities.

www.habitat.ca

Co-ops: mixed-income housing projects

Housing Cooperatives are a form of cooperative where the members occupy and jointly own and manage a housing development. The cooperative model is unique in that it allows a variety of income groups to be served within the same project. In order to operate as a cooperative, an organization must be incorporated under the Cooperative Act of Alberta and must operate on a cooperative basis.

In a continuing housing cooperative, the cooperative continues to own the property. Members purchase shares and pay their share of the mortgage, taxes and all operating expenses. Members join the co-op to provide themselves with housing that is stable, secure and over which they have control. When a member leaves the cooperative, the cooperative repurchases their share at par value.

Limited-equity cooperatives (LECs) represent a form of affordable housing in which resident-members exercise considerable control over their housing environment, primarily through self-management and selection of members. LECs differ from traditional housing cooperatives in that the purchase price of a membership share and the rate of its appreciation are limited in order to maintain affordability.

Edmonton Housing Trust Fund

Increases access to housing by funding the development of new units and accessing market units, coordinates the provision of support services, undertakes community planning and research, raises awareness in the community through events and initiatives that promote ending homelessness

Housing First tenants are accommodated and supported in mixed-income housing that has received grant funding from the Government of Alberta

Home for Life Action Committee

Focuses on raising awareness of the need to build homes that are accessible for a lifetime

HomeEd

HomeEd provides affordable rental units including apartments and townhouses throughout Edmonton. Accessible units for persons with disabilities or reduced mobility are also available on a limited basis. Over 800 rental units are available including two- and three-bedroom townhouses and bachelor, one- and two-bedroom apartments. Ask about accessible, barrier-free units if you have special needs.

Cornerstones: Edmonton's Plan for Affordable Housing

City Council's five year plan (2006-2010) to increase the number of long term affordable housing units and advocate for increases in income supports and support services funding for lower income Edmontonians in need of housing. Cornerstones helped Council create and upgrade 553 secondary suites and over 3,300 safe and affordable homes for citizens.

Cornerstones II

A second phase of the successful Cornerstones program, Cornerstones II, is now underway for 2012-2016. Cornerstones II include another five-year secondary suite grant program, as well as the new Housing Opportunities Program for Edmonton (HOPE) and the Curb Appeal Program. Seniors with disabilities (Qualifying applicants who are 65 years of age or older, and persons with a physical disability that can be verified in writing by a physician, will be given priority.)

Housing Opportunities Program for Edmonton (HOPE)

A new home repair program for qualifying-income homeowners living in designated priority neighbourhoods is available.

http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/programs/hope-program.aspx

The Provincial standard

Alberta Building Code STANDATA

http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/cp_building_standata.cfm

Clarifies the requirements for adaptable dwelling units in residential projects that have receive full or partial funding from the Government of Alberta

DC1& 2 Zoning, densification

DC1 Zoning provides for detailed, sensitive control of the use, site development, and design of buildings and disturbance of land where it's necessary to establish, preserve or enhance:

1. Areas of unique character or special environmental concern, as identified and specified in an Area Structure Plan or Area Redevelopment Plan; or
2. Areas or Sites of special historical, cultural, paleontological, prehistorical, natural, scientific or aesthetic interest, as designated under the Historical Resources Act.

DC 2 Zoning provides for direct control over a specific proposed development where any other Zone would be inappropriate or inadequate. The provision shall only be applied to a Site to regulate a specific development under the following circumstances:

1. the proposed development exceeds the development provisions of the closest equivalent conventional Zone'
2. the proposed development requires specific/comprehensive regulations to ensure land use conflicts with neighbouring properties are minimized;
3. the Site for the proposed development has unique characteristics that require specific regulations; or
4. the ongoing operation of the proposed development requires specific regulations

DC 2 Zoning is typically the designation used to provide for increased density and as an incentive to developers to build affordable housing.

And cost of adapted units in Edmonton

City maintains a database for all Cornerstones housing projects. The information provided includes the type of unit and the rents charged.

(Transit Oriented Developments – housing that is located in major transit hubs)

Age-friendly City

Adapts its structures and services to be physically accessible to and inclusive of people with varying needs and capabilities

Modes of Transportation: Discussion Summary

Taxi:

- Taxi service is fine, taxi companies will send an accessible taxi but there are delays
- Taxi's do not let you pre-book (for example at a restaurant) and there is a need to pre-book, but clients don't always know when they are ready to leave so a true 24/7 reliable taxi service is required
- More availability of wheelchair accessible taxis
- More work with taxi commission
- Lobby and consult with clients as there are problems with some drivers, meters on prior to being secured, and clients on taxi board

DATS:

- DATS complaints – not punctual, riders live close, but 2 different busses (require more coordination), needs to be more efficient. Limits on loading times (5 minutes total) some don't allow flexibility if participant is not ready
- Clients have lost DATS because didn't have access – could be prevented if they had an escort, when they only need an escort sometimes (must be registered escorts and allow more flexibility of whom)
- Appeals to advisory process doesn't work well
- 3 strikes 'you're out' process is hard – if they lose DATS have to go to taxi – subscriptions are not held and late (Taxi drivers need disability training)
- Confusion about DATS drop off locations, not consistent – not clear messaging at DATS as to approve drop offs. Details need to be provided to DATS administration so that these errors can be resolved.
- DATS is appreciated, but needs work
- Improved service for short term disabilities - DATS process to apply for takes too long
- Attendant could ride with client with a free bus pass or have a specialized pass identifying they need to be with an attendant (would free up DATS use)
- Flexibility on passes – 3 passes – DATS, BUS if attendant cannot go, neither can the client
- Specialized service for cognitive impairments – designated cognitive driver (they need to be aware of who they are picking up) – better process for cognitive clients DATS denies them at times
- DATS needs a card system – one card also for “cognitive” clients (C card)
- DATS is fabulous - Door to Door service (DATS) and phone confirmation
- Wide availability of where someone can purchase bus passes and DATS tickets
- 2 hour travel time is too much! ½ - 2 hour pick up window – hard to be on time for work – need specific time and decrease travel times – Also

- booking 3 days in advance is too hard – need more demand bookings – also cab time (1/2 hour) needs more advanced booking
- DATS more efficient/organized in delivery and trained in various disabilities including cognitive

Bus:

- Drivers are polite and listen to client – good customer Bus drivers are good with seniors – wait till seated when balance is an issue
- Understanding bus drivers
- Need regular ETS service down to ACT – no ETS service – Just DATS and not everyone is eligible to take DATS
- More specialized services during rush hour as people need to get to work, appointments
- Online and phone in bus route schedule
- Support staff can ride for free with clients on busses only.

LRT:

- Design standards (engage people who need the service) – new construction, door buttons (push to open towards individuals), and parking in front of chair ramps
- LRT quick fixes – i.e. ramps and platform
- No snow removal at LRT parking stations – have to phone to get removed – Need specific parking for vans with ramps at LRT stations – otherwise people have to use two stalls (Glenrose model)
- Improvements to security system (cameras and peace officers)
- Ramps do not line up with platform and people are too afraid to use in case wheelchair gets stuck.
- Elevators out of service – have to get off at previous station and take bus and can take delays to fix
- More automatic doors on the LRT
- Accordion LRT car gap attachment
- LRT announcements
- ABSPD needs to work with transportation on new LRT construction signage, etc.
- Advisory boards working closer with transportation especially for new initiatives like the LRT expansion and boards (i.e. taxi commission, transportation department working together) – include persons with disabilities

Awareness / Education

- Enhanced Marketing and awareness of travel training
- Public awareness & advertising services available
- Advertising city services so public is more aware of what is available including public service announcements to increase awareness of disability transportation issues
- Increased promotion of travel training programs and related services

- City needs to know that “new visitors” may not know system – brochure could be available to service providers, welcome wagons, etc. More advertising

Travel & Training:

- More staff training in disability awareness
- Cultural sensitivity training
- DATS more efficient, better organized in dispatching and more training in awareness of disabilities (especially cognitive disabilities), better system of identification of cognitive disabilities; more flexibility and decrease drive and wait times
- Increased security, training for drivers and client bullying
- Bring up with DATS office – specialized training and need people to deal with cognitive clients (specific dispatcher) Cognitive clients need more flexibility and understanding
- Mandatory Education (link with safety), the training of all drivers (ETS and DATS) and appeals board

Other:

- Quicker bussing service – More service, DATS, ETS and taxi
- ACT accessibility and around city – Problems of waiting and then being late results in missing programs – Reduce waiting!
- Expansion beyond Edmonton to Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove, rural areas, etc.
- More DATS, yellow Cab, buses etc.
- More modes of transportation and enhanced quality of service delivery
More community sessions for input – yearly or every two years (later in the day)
- Stress overall safety on public transit
- Problem with able-bodied not giving up accessible seats on buses/trains – bus driver knowledge – ridership etiquette

Modes of Transportation: Existing Supports

City of Edmonton: All ETS vehicles are wheelchair accessible (LRT cars, low floor buses, community buses, articulated buses)

Snow Clearing:

Call the City of Edmonton at 311 for road clearing/snow removal, if the snow piles are on City property. Snow removal on private property is the responsibility of the property owner.

Driver Complaints:

Please advise DATS or ETS immediately if the service received is not appropriate, so that an investigation can be conducted. Similarly, if extraordinary or exemplary service is received, please advise.

Drivers are trained to provide appropriate levels of customer service, and are reminded to ensure passengers are seated / secure prior to leaving bus stops. However, customers are also encouraged to remind the driver, as they board and pay their fare, to wait until they're seated. ETS also provided Customer Communication Cards, free of charge, to our customers, which utilize pre-printed messages to facilitate better communication between driver and customer. One of these messages includes "I have balance difficulties. Please wait until I am seated before moving the bus".

ETS BUS drivers: also welcome the use of ETS Customer Communication Cards, which provide more detailed/explanatory information to the operator to help them provide the best possible customer service

Procedures

DATS service is available for those who cannot use the regular transit system. Also, if there appears to be difficulty in service received for those individuals with cognitive impairments, it is important to ensure their client files are current so that appropriate service can be matched to the client's needs.

Drivers will provide sufficient loading time for all clients. Clients should assume responsibility in being ready for the trip at the beginning of the trip window period.

Clients who are designated as requiring mandatory escorts will always be able to bring their escort with them on DATS. However, the primary focus for DATS is for the transport of the clients, not their family members, friends, or others who wish to travel with them for convenience.

Clients only "lose" DATS if they repeatedly no-show or if there are behavioural problems with the client that cannot be rectified.

DATS provides service to approximately 10,000 clients and as the service is a shared-ride program, clients must consider that others on their trips need to be picked up and dropped off as well. Every effort is made to schedule trips to clients coming from or going to similar locales in order to create the most efficient service as possible, but it is not an individualized service.

DATS Appeal Process is available to those denied their initial application, but more importantly, customer training is available on regular ETS to assist those who have no experience with buses or trains, to help them make the most of the transit system and its services and features.

Clients are encouraged to bring their own advocates to appeal meetings. The Interview Appeal Panel includes clients and disability advocates or agency

representatives, as well as a DATS staff member, and decisions are made as a group, not by DATS.

DATS Trip Cancellation:

Clients are expected to cancel trips ahead of the trip arrival point, so that it does not negatively impact on the scheduling of trips, and the ability of other customers sharing that ride to obtain the trips they need. There is a cost to missed trips, and clients must accept some responsibility in calling to cancel unnecessary trips

DATS receives hundreds of applications each month, and the review and registration process takes time to complete – an average of 2 weeks.

AISH and online purchase customers can have bus passes mailed.

Attendant/Travel Companion

For those customers who are DATS registrants, they can use regular transit (buses or trains) and bring along a travel companion (attendant, aide, family, friend, etc) who travels for free once the DATS registrant pays their fare and shows their registration card to the driver

LRT

City staff, Jim Stein from *ETS is investigating* LRT ramps and platform.

LRT Elevators: Customers can call the elevator hotline (496-4154), updated daily, to determine if the elevators at the stations they are travelling to are in working order, or check the City website for current information

Advertising / Awareness

ETS regularly promotes its accessible services, features, and programs through community outreach, our travel training program, on our website, in our customer newsletters, through onboard advertising, in the media, and through ongoing work with our community partners at events and in projects throughout Edmonton

Training

http://www.edmonton.ca/transportation/ets/riding_ets/mobility-choices-training-program.aspx

Mobility Choices: ETS provides a free, customized travel training program for seniors, persons with disabilities, and agencies or organizations that work with persons with mobility challenges. The Mobility Choices Training Program was designed to tell Edmontonians about our range of accessibility options. The program is made up of several information sections with both video and verbal presentations. The program will give you a general or detailed and specific overview of ETS accessible services and features, and is accompanied by route and service brochures and vehicle demonstrations where feasible. This free

program, offered since 1995, is advertised on our website and through a variety of outreach programs in the community throughout the year. Callers to 311 will also be referred to “Mobility Choices” upon request.

Edmonton Transit offers Mobility Choices on an individual and group basis. For individuals who wish to learn about using ETS, one-on-one training is available. For organizations and groups that need on-going training, ETS can also train agency representatives so that they can provide the information to their own clients.

ETS and DATS drivers receive training working with people with varying levels of ability, as well as sensitivity training. All ETS operations staff also participates in Senior Friendly Training certified through the Alberta Council on Aging. As well, drivers receive regular refresher and remedial training

Measuring UP Resource Guide

Pages: 42-44 http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/Measuring-Up-Resource-Guide.pdf

Parking Infrastructure: Discussion Summary

Barrier Free Design

- Follow the Barrier free design
- Improve parking building codes

Parkade's/Parking Lots

- Create empty spaces beside vehicles for ramps to open up
- In a small parking lot there is limited parking spots for persons with disabilities
- Create taller parkades as some vehicles are taller and do not fit on the assigned level where handicapped parking is located (8' and then an 8' aisle which is not the current building code – 11') Education is needed. In the winter these stalls are covered in snow and then not cleared. Would 16' parking stalls affect the # of stalls in a parking lot? In the building code there is a number there should be.
- Will older parking stalls be changed?
- Parking at malls for taller vehicles in parkades
- Insist on a policy so that on each building lease – there needs to be accessible parking. If not then they need to bring up to code
- 1st floor accessible parking for taller vehicles for car parks so they do not have to park outside
- Put in building code to be 16' for parking for vehicles with ramps
- Have proper parking lots and enough spots (not on fields) for events
- Perception versus actual parking (parking is important for all people)
- Need better snow removal policy for accessible stalls and businesses
- Need proper ramp placement in parking stalls/curb cuts/ LRT ramps
- Painted Meridians

Suggestions for Improvement

- Park Mobility APP: New way to report inappropriate use of accessible stalls, half of fee collected is donated to a non-profit organization that the reporter chooses.
- Develop accessible parking app i.e. location, lack of stalls, plus meter info
- Enforcement Issues for parking in accessible stalls without a placard
- City penalties for cab discriminatory (Practice and education needed)
- Accessible Pedestrian Visual/Audio Policy
- Increase the minimum standards and more things mandatory at building stage
- More bylaw enforcers
- Money allotted (grants) to use as incentives to change parking and building codes for older buildings

Curbcuts

- Curb ramp is not placed properly in front of the stall; needs to be on the side of the vehicle
- Problem of maintenance
- Standard Curb Cuts with tactile strips for LRT platforms
- Obstruction of sidewalk and building access i.e. Vehicles, sidewalk newsstands, planters

Awareness/Education

- There is some awareness
- Aesthetics versus accessibility (i.e. planters) are problems in certain locations
- More public involvement and activism in community access i.e. snow removal
- Feasibility studies needed at different locations to see if they are following the code and if the building is accessible
- Encouraging reducing the need for parking: use public transportation
- Having people with disabilities be champions for effective policy changes and action plans
- Incorporating visibility discussions in already existing city meetings/conversation events
- Driver testing/education on accessible parking etiquette

Other

- More accessible cabs needed
- All public transportation need stop announcements and visual boards
- Architect design focused on accessibility needed
- In older buildings there may not be accessible washrooms or an elevator, high need for retrofits

Parking/Infrastructure: Existing Supports

City of Edmonton Accessibility Funding

Annual \$300,000 allocated for retrofits to City owned and operated buildings and \$75,000 to Park retrofits.

Accessible Parking Awareness Week

City of Edmonton Accessible Parking Public Campaign. "Lazy is not a Disability"
http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/ABSPD_flyerHR.pdf

ADF Barrier Free Design in Alberta: Summary of the Issues

Downloadable for free from the web address below:

http://www.adforum.ca/files/ADF_BFD_position_paper.pdf

Barrier Free Design Guide 2008

The Barrier-Free Council of the Safety Codes Council, in partnership with Alberta Safety Services has developed the Barrier-Free Design Guide to provide further interpretation and understanding of accessibility requirements under section 3.8. of the Alberta Building Code. The Guide also makes recommendations for best practice design solutions including residential living. https://sccuat-web.sharepoint.com/SCC_Documents/2008_SCC_BFDG_FINAL_protected.pdf

Snow Angels

Snow Angels is an awareness and recognition program. It encourages Edmontonians to help a neighbour in need by shoveling their snow. It also acknowledges those volunteers as a City of Edmonton Snow Angel. http://edmonton.ca/for_residents/awards_certificates/snow-angels.aspx

Open Forum: Discussion Summary

Disability & Age

- Beginning at age 65 AISH recipients move to Seniors benefits and are no longer able to access grants/funds through Community Development (for barriers/other small supports). Seniors with disabilities have limited supports (financial, housing)
- AISH clients need to be educated on changes once they reach age 65 on how to plan for future
- Services differ for different demographics i.e. 65 years +
- Gaps in services after children reach 18. They are not aware of where to access services

Information Sharing

- Need for organizations to go into community health centers to provide information on services available and how to access them
- Lots of information available, not sure how to access everything – barrier could be because of single stream funding for one disability group
- Funding is difficult to access by organizations (re: awareness of services)
- Desire to have every City of Edmonton recreation program inclusive for all citizens with disabilities
- Should know where to access info even if you don't have a disability i.e.: housing needs and senior
- Need central source of all disability groups to access information on what they provide – (like Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council)
- Organizations supporting individuals with more than one disability (complex needs) and how to get information related to all needs

Cross Over of Services

- Stigma of having a mental health issue and access barriers to services (e.g. adults with autism – also transition from physical to mental services) – lack of services available for certain groups – how to integrate?
- Confusion over jurisdiction of the supports that are available – especially if this is a new system - how do you start and who can help?
- Still have silo's of info based on disability – not enough cross over of services is known
- Transfer of information (i.e.: availability of disability tax credit)
- Disconnect in AHS between health services and services available
- Challenge – some supports work differently depending on province, country (i.e.: Easter Seals/ March of Dimes)
- Methods to form networks and to communicate better is needed

Policy

- Create a policy – run all through inclusive lens prior to policy development/program/services created (like diversity lens).
- Community expertise already exists – need to connect with City of Edmonton. How can disability organizations support other organizations (i.e. City, YMCA camps)
- Enforcement of existing policies needs to be looked at – needs to be tightened up – person who enforces inclusion lens?
- Forgetting that when we are creating policies/ practices we are sometimes putting up additional barriers (i.e.: life jackets)

Awareness

- Raise awareness to general public of services that already exist
- Imaging of information out should have images of persons with disabilities, seniors, etc. Depicted to show inclusion of programs +s services – consistent messaging that would be inclusive of all disability groups “Universal”
- Creating Inclusion Lens – ensuring images/information includes persons with disabilities in all aspects
- Have to stop putting labels on individuals; should be treated as just an individual who needs services
- Do not clump disabilities together! What are differences between visible and non visible?
- Focus on functional limitations (focus) instead of impairments
- Shift in thinking / starting from front line help (Top down shift)
- Education/Training/ Attitude/ Policy changing
- Listing of all disabilities/ concerns that affect all individuals – includes all services (City of Edmonton and surrounding area)

Programs

- Facilities are accessible. But programs are not whole community focused
- Not just meeting standards for facilities/programs – need to exceed for future needs and communities

Collaboration

- Community Partnering (All programs/services, disability areas) /Networking (City and Surrounding Areas)
- It takes a village to raise a community
- Purposeful collaboration – services don’t end where the roads ends (website/forums/ Facebook/ twitter)
- Funding cuts have made the problem larger when it comes to coming together and communicating (hard to find resources to make it happen)
- More groups need to be put together that resemble the City of Edmonton inclusive recreation interagency committee
- Harness expertise, how do we work together? Need to come together and talk all the time!

- Challenge – when organizations/services providers are working against each other – how do you connect the dots?
- Need stronger link between city services/opportunities and organizations
- Disability spreads to include all demographics, cultures, religions – need to find cohesion (can also have multiple disabilities so tied to several organizations) – need central support in these situations

Other

- Lobby for more support
- Review services, policies and practices of Edmonton and compare to other cities i.e. Vancouver, USA (Municipal Government Act)
- ABSPD is communication bridge within City Administration between all stakeholders
- ABSPD should lobby for more City Of Edmonton staff that are qualified (and have a disability)
- Promote genuine inclusion
- Parents have a voice through provincial advisory board to express concerns
- How can 311 be more parallel to 211 services – is there a stronger link (database) of all services available that needs to be created? – is there a challenge with this?
- Need someone at City of Edmonton in administration for point of access – stronger support for City of Edmonton positions that support the disabled community.

Open Forum: Existing Supports

The Support Network (211)

211 is an umbrella organization that overlooks the operations of the Crisis Support Centre, 211 Edmonton, and Volunteer Edmonton. They help individuals and families in Northern Alberta and the Capital Region lead fulfilling lives while supporting the communities they live in. 211 Edmonton is a program of The Support Network that provides a direct link between essential community services and the people who need them. Just dial 2-1-1 or call (780) 482-INFO (4636).

Child Disability Resource Link 1-877-644-9992

City of Edmonton: Interagency committee on Inclusive Recreation

The City hosts this committee with membership from disability related non profit organizations across the City. The main goal of the Interagency on Inclusive Recreation is information and resource sharing.

Alberta Disabilities Forum (ADF)

Formed in 1996, ADF is a coalition of over forty not-for-profit provincial disability organizations whose members speak with a unified voice on cross-disability issues of concern for Albertans with disabilities.

<http://www.adforum.ca/>

Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD)

The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities actively promotes full participation in society and provides a voice for Albertans with disabilities.

<http://www.accd.net/>

Self Advocacy Federation

The Self Advocacy Federation (SAF) is a group of people with developmental disability and their allies who believe in everyone working together to build strong communities and promote disability pride.

<http://selfadvocacyfederation.org/>

Training

Muscular Dystrophy, Canada

Our staff and volunteers are available to provide educational presentations to groups, such as schools, local businesses, service clubs, and health care providers.

Paralympic Sports Association (PSA) Sledges in Schools Program is offered to provide the following:

1. To provide equipment (Sledges) for individuals with a disability. Sledges can be borrowed from the PSA; enabling students with equipment to participate in skating/ hockey activities with their class in school AND
2. To provide the opportunity for children and youth to try Sledge Hockey by participating in a Sledge Hockey Demo.

City of Edmonton: Leisure Education Sessions and adapted equipment

City staff can host an information booth on recreation opportunities and what the City has to offer in terms of accessibility and inclusion. Staff can also provide leisure education sessions as requested. An adapted equipment bag is available on loan as well as larger pieces of adapted equipment such as the Trailrider.

Inquiries can be made to recreationdisabilities@edmonton.ca

Active Living alliance for Canadians with a Disability

The Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALACD) promotes supports and enables Canadians with disabilities to lead active, healthy lives. We provide nationally coordinated leadership, support, encouragement, promotion and information that facilitate healthy, active living opportunities for Canadians of all abilities across all settings and environments.

We are an alliance of individuals, agencies and national associations that facilitates and coordinates partnerships among the members of its network. Any

organization, community or individual who embraces our principles and goals is welcome to join the Alliance network. Our network has grown to more than 500,000 contacts.

<http://www.ala.ca/content/home.asp>

Moving to Inclusion

An effective training and professional development tool for those who are working in or training for a career in the recreation, fitness, education, sport and active living fields. Whether you deliver recreation programs, lead physical education classes, provide children's programming, coach athletes or administer programs in these areas, MTI Online will provide the knowledge to facilitate inclusive opportunities for those with different levels of ability and is now available online.

<http://www.ala.ca/mti-iem/index.htm>

All Abilities Welcome

If you're a program or service provider, whether through a municipality, school or an organization, you know how important it is to be inclusive to all members of your community and to promote healthy, Active Living for everyone. When you take on the All Abilities Welcome challenge, it's an indication that you've made a commitment to find a way for everyone to participate. It means you and persons with a disability are working together to create inclusive opportunities for Active Living in your community.

<http://www.allabilitieswelcome.ca/>

Respectful Workplace Training (City of Edmonton) This mandatory course helps employees identify inappropriate behaviours and promote a work environment free from discrimination or harassment.

Measuring Up

Measuring Up Edmonton is aimed at organizations, businesses and individuals who wish to become more accessible to people with a range of abilities. The Measuring Up Toolkit and Resource Guide provide a self-assessment guide and resources to help you or your organization become more accessible and inclusive. www.measuringupedmonton.ca

City of Edmonton: Summer Inclusion Facilitator

Neighborhood Community Day Camps

The City of Edmonton neighborhood day camp programs offered are inclusive of campers with mild to moderate disabilities. If your child has any medical or behavioral concerns, please let us know when you register. These could include allergies, medical conditions or behaviours that may require additional supervision or support. If more supervision or support is required, you may be requested to provide an Aide. Our Inclusion Coordinator will phone you and mail medical forms for you to complete. It is important we receive the forms at least one week prior to camp so that staffs are able to provide appropriate support to

your child. If you have not received a call from the Inclusion Coordinator before camp begins, please call 780-496-2979.

Barrier Free Health

<http://www.barrierfreehealth.ca/take-action>

Limelight Film Showcase

The City of Edmonton in conjunction with several external partners, plan the Limelight disability film showcase. This event illuminates the concept of disability in films from around the world. A majority of the films are written, directed and/or performed by people with various abilities. The films include documentaries, dramas, and animation and are intended to entertain, provoke thought, spark discussion and inspire. Films are available on loan from the Limelight film library.