



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

# ANNUAL REPORT **2021**





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## A MESSAGE FROM HIS WORSHIP, MAYOR AMARJEET SOHI

On behalf of City Council and the people of Edmonton, greetings to the readers of the Accessibility Advisory Committee's (AAC) Annual Report!

As Edmonton's population surpasses one million people, it is increasingly urgent to prioritize creating accessible spaces and places. We are committed to working towards accommodating people of all ages and abilities, and eliminating barriers to those living and working with disabilities.

The efforts of the AAC include providing recommendations for improvements to facilities, infrastructure, programs, services, activities and policies. Their aim is to improve Edmonton's livability, inclusiveness and accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Thank you to the members of the AAC for your continued work in creating a more thriving community for everyone. Because of your efforts, many Edmontonians can continue to live a fulfilling life in our city.

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

A. Sohi

**Amarjeet Sohi**  
Mayor, City of Edmonton





## REPORT FROM THE CHAIR, TONIA LARIVIERE

As Chair of the AAC, I first and foremost want to recognize the contributions of our members, each member brings diverse experiences, perspectives, compassion and passion to the committee. It is a profoundly rewarding experience to learn and contribute to advancements and awareness with them.

We need to thank our former Council representative, Councillor Andrew Knack for his commitment, guidance and generosity with his time, we are a stronger committee because of it. We are excited to have two new Council representatives, Councillor Keren Tang, and Councillor Jo-Anne Wright; although new to their roles they have listened compassionately and with intent to improve accessibility for all Edmontonians, we are fortunate and grateful to have their voices representing the committee on Council and we look forward to engaging with the new city council.

We would also like to publicly thank the Anti-racism Advisory Committee for their impressive work representing all of the City of Edmonton equity-seeking committees regarding the importance, necessity and value of our work; and we extend a generous thank you to City Council for recognizing and valuing the efforts of all who contribute to these committees.

In this report, you will be able to see a list of items we worked on in 2021. Three of our key concerns continue to be transit improvements, snow and ice control and accessible housing. We continue to advise on transit, in particular an improved para-transit system including improvements to DATS and accessible taxis. We spoke to Council and outlined our suggestions and concerns with the lack of accessible taxis. A report was recently commissioned by the city, the findings supported our concerns and suggestions. We are currently working in collaboration with other City of Edmonton equity-seeking committees to support the advancement and improvement of accessible taxis service and will continue to advise on approaches and solutions that will positively impact people with disabilities.

We can all appreciate the challenges of winter in Edmonton, where safety is concerned. For individuals with disabilities, the challenges of snow and ice present challenges that may feel as insurmountable as a windrow. We thank the city for continually engaging and consulting with the AAC on improvements to procedures and policy, and we will continue to advise for the safety and independence of individuals who experience disability.



Accessible housing is a topic that affects every Edmontonian, not just those with a current disability. We appreciate that the city has created an Affordable Housing Investment Plan which could benefit those with disabilities and we would like to see that expanded to include accessible housing. This is a topic of utmost importance that affects basic human rights, the AAC will continue to advocate and educate on matters of accessible housing but we cannot do this alone, we encourage everyone to think about your aging-in-place and the impacts of inclusion for your friends and family who are senior, injured or disabled as we work together to make Edmonton accessible for all.

The committee also worked diligently and thoughtfully on community engagement, it is an important component in our advisory role. The advancements of inclusion for all is a community effort and a societal responsibility, while the AAC is a committee of 15, we represent a community comprised of one-quarter of Edmontonians. Our collective

perspectives, experiences, frustrations and voices aligned can result in small, yet mighty triumphs and just advancements for inclusion. We will continue to engage with the community and bring our concerns forward to Council with purpose and intent.

Thank you to everyone who considered our perspective, respected our voices and contributed to an inclusive Edmonton.





## MANDATE AND ROLE OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As an advisory body to Edmonton City Council, the AAC seeks to understand the unique accessibility and inclusivity needs of the Edmonton community, and how these needs relate to City Council's strategy and policy direction. The AAC undertakes a significant role in helping City Council address the manner in which its strategies and policies impact people with disabilities and provides advice on best practices for engaging Edmontonians with disabilities.

To undertake its mandate in the area of providing policy advice to City Council and City Administration, the AAC has identified the following as priority areas:

- 1. Advise** City Council and City Administration on policies, potential policies, or changes to existing policies that affect access and inclusion for persons with disabilities.
- 2. Participate in and support events** and opportunities that enhance overall awareness of inclusion and accessibility issues in Edmonton.
- 3. Engage** with broader communities of persons with disabilities in a meaningful way, and ensure that the AAC has the necessary information to undertake its advisory role.
- 4. Educate City Council, City Administration and the public** on issues and best practices around inclusion and accessibility.





# ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE







# 2021 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## Reappointments

- Susan Amer
- Kassi Boyd
- Carleen Brenneis
- Jaime Caza
- Crystal Jones
- Sheri Klassen
- Patricia Kocon
- Tonia LaRiviere
- Jason Pisesky
- Paige Reeves
- Tracey Rice
- Nadeem Sunderji

## New Appointments

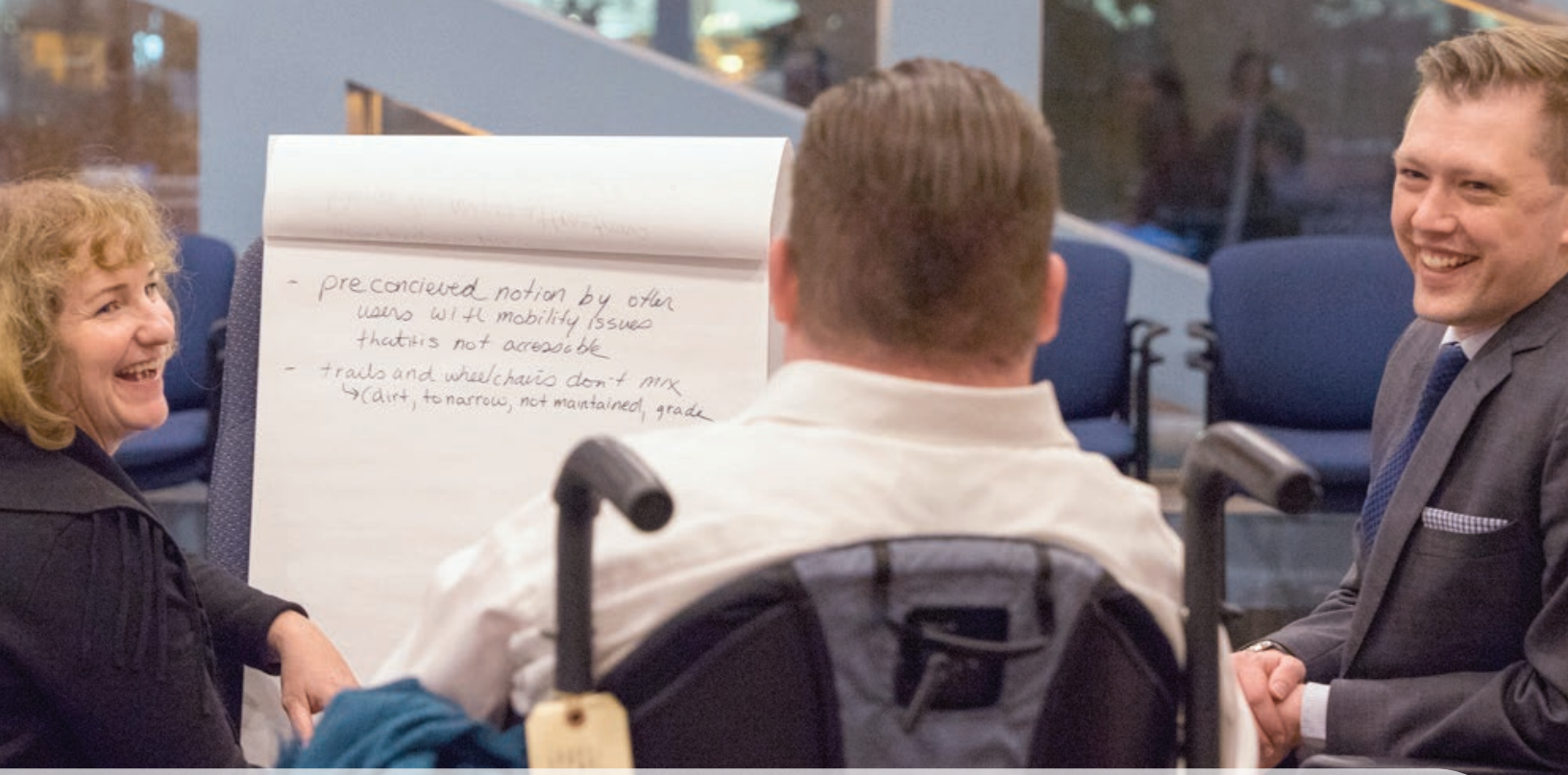
- Illara Stefaniuk-Gaudet
- Marcy Vautour
- Zachary Weeks

## Outgoing Members

- Chitra Bakshi
- Janet Davies-Davis
- Vanessa Van







## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

### Overview of the 2021 accomplishments:

- Developed and shared an accessibility presentation with City Hall Schools
- Development of a contact list of local non-profits and other organizations that serve the disability community
- Sent a letter to increase AAC awareness and community connections
- Created an action calendar for National AccessAbility Week
- Bus Network Redesign survey
- Support of IDPD in full International Day of Persons with Disability
- Presentation on intersectionality
- AAC developed and presented to electoral candidates during the City of Edmonton municipal election
- AAC creating more awareness at Glenrose Hospital with information on accessibility
- Development of social media strategy to better connect with community
- Created an AAC mission, vision and value statements
- Development of a yearly thematic social media calendar to be informed on current accessible issues
- Formal welcome of new City Council with a letter
- Expanded AAC reach to advocate for mental health and addiction/homelessness





A close-up photograph of a person's legs in brown trousers and grey sneakers, seated in a wheelchair. The wheelchair is on a very muddy, uneven surface, likely a construction site or a path under construction. The person's feet are on the wheelchair's footrests. The background is a blurry, brown, textured ground.

## POLICY REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

### Overview of the 2021 accomplishments:

- Updated the Checklist for Accessibility and Universal Design so it is aligned with the latest version of the Cities Access Design Guide
- Consulted with/advised Lime and Bird eScooter companies around accessibility concerns eScooters present on Edmonton streets and sidewalks
- Created an AAC language guide and incorporated into the bylaws
- Created a Group Expectations document to accompany the new committee code of conduct
- Met with the City Clerk's Office and learned about speaking to Council
- Continued advocacy around increasing accessible housing in Edmonton, with particular focus on the need for housing that is both accessible and affordable. Leger Consulting was engaged in a research report on 'Accessible Housing Research Study for People with Disabilities' designed to identify gaps between supply and demand in accessible housing. Research was completed in August 2021. Advocacy work continues on this issue.
- Continued advocacy around accessible taxis working with the Vehicle for Hire department. Pivotal Research Inc was engaged to do a needs assessment and study to improve the accessibility of vehicles for hire in Edmonton. Research was completed in late October with a presentation from the consultants complete with recommendations. Advocacy work continues on this issue.
- Participated in the Communications Review of the social identity and inclusion section
- Continued involvement with Policy C602 'The Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy' implementation across departments
- Created Accessible Event Guidelines for City of Edmonton staff to use both internally and with external partners
- Advised on changes to the snow and ice control policy — advocating for more efficient and effective removal of snow from City streets and sidewalks as well as implementation of support for those residents who are unable to remove snow themselves



**Carrie Anton**  
Gold Medalist - Goal Ball  
**EVENTS**



**Viviane Forest**  
Gold Medalist - Alpine  
Skiing & Goal Ball



**Morgan Bird**  
Bronze Medalist - Swimming

## National AccessAbility Week (NAAW)

National AccessAbility Week celebrates the contributions of people with disabilities and functional impairments. The celebration recognizes the efforts of individuals, communities and workplaces to enhance inclusion by removing barriers. NAAW aims to act as a tool for social change by creating conversations around the issues of education, transportation, housing, employment and recreation across the Country.

Many organizations plan events throughout the week of May 28<sup>th</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup> to celebrate and recognize the efforts of individuals and groups making our communities more welcoming and accessible.

The AAC created a social media calendar to highlight actions citizens can take to be more accessible or inclusive.

## December 3<sup>rd</sup>

### Support of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)

The International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 47/3. The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons, 3 December, aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. The theme of the Day is based on the goal of full and equal enjoyment of human rights and participation in society by persons with disabilities, established by the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the General Assembly in 1982. As of December 18th, 2007,

the UN changed the name from International Day of Disabled Persons to the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Nothing About Us Without Us was the theme of this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The AAC partnered with the Edmonton IDPD committee and helped bring together the many individuals, organizations and governments associated with persons with disabilities for one day of celebration within Edmonton IDPD Zoom Event 2021 on moving from recreational to competitive sport.





## NETWORKING

Listed below are the activities the Committee's members were engaged in. Members volunteered over 1400 hours to committee work in 2021.

### Guests Attending Monthly AAC meetings

#### Presenters (General meeting)

- January 11 — presentation from Jane Ni and Jodi Goebel on Waste management (Cart rollout program)
- February 8 — Bus Network Redesign and On Demand — Sarah Feldman
- March 8 — Francis Asuncion attended Community Engagement and introduced himself and City Communications
- March 9 — Meeting with Waste Services on wording suggestion for website and assisted waste collection requirements (medical note) — Jane Ni, Mordecai Baba, Tony Colangelo
- April 5 — Valley Line Southeast, PWD Communications — Michelle Ponich, Yann Dumont, Isabel Onaba, Dallas Lindskoog
- May 19 — Snow and Ice presentation — Andrew Grant, Nelson Adkin, Nupur Thakor, Paul Marinkovich, Valerie Dacyk, Phillip Herritt
- June 7 — City Clerk's Office discussion — Heather Morrison, Dennis Beaudry
- Scooter discussion — LIME and BIRD organizational representatives
- June 14 — AAC meeting — Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board (ETSAB) member attended (Michelle Peters Jones)
- June 14 — Voter Accessibility Plan (Jenny Albers, Tara Ward)
- November 8 — Accessible Vehicle for Hire Needs Assessment presentation (Pivotal research)
- November 8 — AAC meeting — ETSAB member attended (Michelle Peters Jones)
- December 13 — Housing Report presentation (Leger representatives)



## NETWORKING

### Conferences/Meetings Attended by Committee Members

- March 11/12 — Tonia LaRiviere attended Rick Hansen Foundation conference
- April 5 — AAC contributed to study by The Centre for Healthy Communities (U of A) Understanding Urban Accessibility: A community-engaged pilot study of entrance features
- April 12 — Met COE Admin to talk about the City of Edmonton's bid for the 2026 FIFA games and submitted a letter of support
- April 13 — Employ by Example Press Conference put on by Student Advocates For Public Health — (Paige Reeves, Tonia LaRiviere)
- April 28 — Webinar — Commitment to Action Listening Session, Members of Disability Community EPS (Marcy Vautour)
- May 20 — Met with WAVE Chairs to enhance an intersectional lens to our work (Tonia LaRiviere)
- May 25 — Public Places bylaw 14614 discussion to expand on the anti bullying provisions (Tonia LaRiviere met with Mike Chow, David Aitken and CoE staff )
- May 25 — Meeting with Chairs/vice chairs on the issue of Equity and compensation for volunteer city advisory board members
- May 25 — Valley Line Southeast — Paige Reeves attended the meeting re: the review and approval of the Valley Line Southeast Passenger and Public Safety Program brochure
- May 31 — Webinar — Accessibility Standards Canada Annual Public Meeting (Tonia LaRiviere)
- June 1 — Training opportunity: Chairs of Civic Agencies (Allyson Szafranski, Sheri Klassen, Paige Reeves, Tonia LaRiviere)
- June 2 — NAAW Webinar "Disability Inclusion 2021: Leaving no one behind" hosted by Employment and Social Development Canada, (ESDC) Social Development Partnerships Program hosted a NAAW webinar (Tonia LaRiviere)
- June 2 — Training opportunity: Members of Civic Agencies (Allyson Szafranski, Jaime Caza, Illara Stefaniuk-Gaudet, Nadeem Sundji, Zachary Weeks)
- June 16 — Shelter Standard conversation (Zachary Weeks, Marcy Vautour, Tonia LaRiviere, Allyson Szafranski)
- June 30 — Meeting with Robert Lipka re: Transit Station at WEM
- Blue Quill Community League Accessible Garden Plan (Zachary Weeks and Patti Kocon)
- August 10 — Media Training with Linda Hoang





## NETWORKING

- August 17 — AAC Facilitated Session with Parados — Communication Support/Strategy Development
- September 1 — SOLVABLE: A Federal Election Town Hall with Edmonton Mayor Don Iveson\_ Affordable Housing Conversation (Tonia LaRiviere)
- September 8 — Open Space Strategies Kyle Paynel, Angela Hobson
- October 18 — Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Liaisons with Eli Mina (Tonia LaRiviere)
- October 19 — Edmonton Chamber of Volunteer Organizations: EDI Series: Accessibility
- November (Various dates) — AAC members attended Code of conduct training
- November 25 — Single use items Strategy presentation — Michael Glazier
- December 3 — IDPD Edmonton 2021 — The Road to the Podium: Moving From Recreational to Competitive Sport

### Presentations done by Committee Members

- May 25/27 — presentations to City Hall school (Sheri, Jaimie, Zachary, Heather)
- September 14 — presentation to electoral candidates for municipal election

### Council Meetings — AAC Speaking to Council

- April 14 — Jason Pisesky and Tonia LaRiviere presented AAC Annual Report (2019/2020) to City Council



From  
January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021  
there were

**2,053 parking tickets issued**

by the City of Edmonton to people parked illegally in designated Accessible Parking Stalls; an increase from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 which had 1800 tickets issued for the same violation.



## ACCESSIBLE PARKING AWARENESS

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





# SOCIAL MEDIA



facebook.com/  
AACyeg

The AAC underwent a review of social media and therefore did not post many times in 2021. In 2022, the AAC will utilize professional services to increase its presence.

The most liked tweet in 2021: **The municipal elections is right around the corner. AAC wants to let all election candidates know the struggles you face in #yeg regarding your disability and accessibility. Let us know #yegvote #disability #yegcc**

The most liked Facebook post in 2021:  
**Great initiative taken by a local business to be more inclusive.**



Beginning of January 2021, we had **718** people follow **AAC page** which is slightly down from 2020 (716).



@AACyeg  
**767**  
followers .....  
up from 686 in 2020



## CONTACT US

### Website

[edmonton.ca/accessibility](http://edmonton.ca/accessibility)

### Email

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[facebook.com/AACyeg](https://facebook.com/AACyeg)



[@AACyeg](https://twitter.com/AACyeg)

