

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 2021
ONLINE FORUM

Present: John Graham (Chairperson), Scott Jocelyn, Dianna Scarth, Martin Harder, Josh Watt, Laurel Repski, Kris Cowley, Brad Robertson, John Wyndels and Colleen Watters (MAO)

Absent: None

The chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and participants introduced themselves. Council members participated in a learning session on the Appreciative Inquiry Process (often used in educational forums), which facilitates discussion of a multiplicity of views in a positive way. It provides tools and techniques to bring about a vision for the future, while harmonizing everyone's strengths. This tool could be utilized to obtain stakeholder feedback during the Customer Service Standard review.

Council members discussed the Customer Service Standard Review terms of reference. According to the most recent version, the consultation process was to conclude in April 2021, with a final report due to the Minister on September 10th.

Decision: Council recommended that the Customer Service Standard Review Terms of Reference be amended to state that the consultation process end in June 2021, with a final report due to the Minister on September 10th.

The chair and secretary provided updates to the Council. The secretary raised the issue of American Sign Language (ASL) and the Customer Service Standard requirement that communication be provided in a manner accessible to the individual with a disability. This topic first came to light with a public sector organization which understood it had an obligation to provide ASL but asked about the responsibility of customer. Smaller organizations are beginning to raise the issue as they try to determine the best ways to communicate with clients who are Deaf. It will be important that the review address this area. The question was raised as to whether retailers and professional organizations could fund this type of accommodation. One suggestion is to set aside a pool of money for ASL.

Nova Scotia has begun the process of standard review. The three remaining standards in Information and Communications, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces not yet implemented in Manitoba are moving through the development stages.

The chair reported on the results of preliminary, high level conversations with stakeholders requesting suggestions on how the Council could conduct the Customer Service Standard review

Action: It was agreed that the secretary prepare a document for Council providing an overview of the Customer Service Standard review process.

Council discussed proposed time lines, components of the review, technological platforms and guiding questions.

Decision: By February 4, 2021, the secretary will develop a short overview document for Council's consideration. Council will hold a preliminary discussion on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 2:00 pm to approve the document and talk about technology considerations for the review process.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.