

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS OF THE  
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING,  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2020  
ONLINE FORUM**

**Present:** John Graham (Chairperson), Scott Jocelyn, Dianna Scarth, Martin Harder, Josh Watt, Brad Robertson, Laurel Repski, Kris Cowley, John Wyndels (DIO), Yutta Fricke (DIO), Erika Vas(DIO), Colleen Watters (DIO).

**Absent:** None

The chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and members introduced themselves. Prior to the meeting, the DIO provided new Council members with an orientation to the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, the Disabilities Issues Office and an overview of past activities, along with supporting documentation.

The chairperson provided an overview of the standards in customer service and employment currently enacted, and an update on the information and communications and transportation standards. Separate inter-governmental committees are currently reviewing recommendations for the information and communications and transportation standards. The committees will work with Legislative Counsel to prepare proposed standards for a second round of public comment. Following a thorough review of comments received, suggested amendments to the draft standard will be forwarded to the Minister for consideration, before the standard will be finalized and sent to Cabinet for enactment.

In November, Council will begin a mandatory five-year review of the customer service standard with further discussion at the next meeting.

The Accessibility Advisory Council's updated Terms of Reference were circulated prior to the meeting. One of the recommendations of the four-year review of the AMA was a more robust T of R, including decisions and actions written into the minutes of council meetings. The chairperson reviewed the Council Terms of Reference, highlighting guiding AMA principles, the roles and responsibilities of Council and members, Council processes and meeting schedules.

Council reviewed the Design of Public Spaces Proposed Standard. the original intent of the AMA was to cover the Built Environment. In the AMA, built environment is defined as applying to "facilities, building, structures and premises". Given these areas are already governed by the Manitoba Building Code, the Minister chose to have the standard apply to the design of exterior public spaces and avoiding duplication with the Manitoba Building Code.

The standard development committee process and the formation of the Design of Public Spaces Committee were highlighted. The committee met over 20 times to develop the standard and included Landscape designers, architects, representatives from the vision

impaired community and people with other disabilities. Members of the disability community felt very strongly that accessibility of the design of public spaces was not the intent of the AMA.

In developing their recommendations, the committee relied heavily on existing design standards for the exterior environment. While these design standards are non-binding, they represent accepted “norms” and best practices in the design of exterior environment features. The standard would apply broadly to all sectors following a staggered schedule that would govern the design of all new exterior projects. The suggested time lines are similar to existing standards.

The standard also contains a public education component but does not deal with compliance. A separate compliance framework for the AMA including current and subsequent accessibility standards was developed. The current focus is on educating into compliance.

The issue of funding municipalities to facilitate accessibility improvements was raised. In Nova Scotia, their standard included funding provisions to help organizations implement accessibility improvements. In Ontario, grants are made to larger sectors to develop tools and resources to assist organizations with standard implementation. So far, the Manitoba Government has chosen not to move in this direction despite recommendations from the council and community.

**Decision:** Council agreed that the report of the Design of Public Spaces Standard Development Committee expand the introduction to include language recognizing the need for government funding to address the prevention and removal of barriers.

**Action:** DIO will add to the preamble the need to include financial investment in the form of funding or grants within the standard for the design of public spaces. Once these changes are made, DIO will forward to the chairperson for review and then on to the Minister on behalf of Council.

At the October meeting, Council will discuss the mandatory review of the customer service standard. The Terms of Reference have received government consent but require Council approval.

**Action:** the Secretary will forward the Terms of Reference to Council members prior to the next meeting.

**Action:** the Secretary will also check with the Assistant Director of Compliance regarding her availability to present at the next meeting.

The next Council meeting will take place on Friday, October 23, 2020 from 10:00 AM to noon via online forum.