

Developing a Plan for Accessibility: The City of Brandon's Accessibility Plan 2016.

The following text is the script for the June 7, 2016 power point presentation at the meeting of the City of Brandon Accessibility Working Group Sub-Committee. The power point presentation is entitled: Developing a Plan for Accessibility: The City of Brandon's Accessibility Plan 2016.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

On December 5, 2013, the Province of Manitoba enacted, *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act*. This act deals with measures necessary to ensure all City services are accessible to everyone who might require to use them. It also specifically reinforces the obligation to make reasonable accommodations as outlined by The Human Rights Code.

The Human Rights Code

The Human Rights Code applies to any individual, organization, business or government body, if they engage in discrimination or harassment in one of the areas covered by The Human Rights Code. In most cases, to enforce your rights under The Human Rights Code requires filing a complaint with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act requires that accessibility standards are developed over the next several years. Each of the standards will be adopted as a provincial regulation and will apply to common public areas. A new standard will be released every two years. There are to be five standards.

Customer Service Standard Regulation

The first standard that has been released by the province is the Customer Service Standard Regulation.

City of Brandon Accessibility Plan

The City of Brandon is required to develop an Accessibility Plan by December 2016 and to update it every two years. This plan will be Brandon's roadmap to developing accessible City services.

Goal

The City's accessibility goal is to have the City of Brandon services accessible for everyone.

Statement of Commitment

The City of Brandon is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion. We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers by identifying, removing and preventing these barriers and by meeting the requirements of **The Accessibility for Manitobans Act**.

Accessibility Coordinator

The City's Accessibility Coordinator is Brian Kayes. It will be Brian's role help everyone work together to accomplish our goal of having accessible City services.

The City of Brandon Accessibility Policy is currently being written and is due to be completed by the end of August.

Accessibility Working Group

The City has formed an Accessibility Working Group. This is made up of approximately 20 City employees from various City Departments. An equally important committee is the Accessibility Working Group Sub-Committee. This committee is made up of Brandon residents who will help develop our plan by advising the City on various aspects of accessibility in Brandon.

Accessibility Champions

The City's Accessibility Program Champions are His Worship, Rick Chrest and City Manager, Scott Hildebrand.

Purpose of the Accessibility Working Group

The team of City employees who make up the Accessibility Working Group realize they have an important job to do. The purpose of the Working group is to provide leadership, awareness and understanding of accessibility issues throughout the organization with a view to having everyone integrate accessibility principles into every activity that the City undertakes.

The Accessibility Working Group will meet on a monthly basis. Their main role is to develop and update the City's Accessibility Plan. This will include reviewing accessibility issues in existing and proposed City facilities and properties. The Working Group will also examine policies, City programs, practices and the variety of services provided.

The Working Group will participate in developing and conducting accessibility audits to identify barriers to accessible customer service. They will participate in developing, coordinating and providing training and information sessions to City employees. The Accessibility Working Group will always positively represent the committee, its work and accessibility issues.

Accessibility Working Group Sub-Committee

The second team of people to have a direct impact on the City's Accessibility Plan is the Accessibility Working Group Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee is made up of Brandon's customers and supported by our Accessibility Champions.

Purpose of the Accessibility Working Group Sub-Committee

The Accessibility Working Group Sub-Committee will provide consultation to the Accessibility Working Group by reviewing and providing comment on the City's Accessibility Plan. The Sub-Committee will comment on the accessibility of City properties. They may review policies, programs and practices to determine how they may be impacting accessibility. And in all of these they will comment on the services that the City provides.

The Sub-Committee will also identify accessibility priorities for the City. They will identify current issues and events that require attention. The Accessibility Working Group Sub-Committee will always positively represent the committee and its work.

The City of Brandon Accessibility Plan

The City of Brandon Accessibility Plan is due to be completed and submitted to the provincial government by early November, 2016.

The Accessibility Plan will include three basic areas. Firstly, what the City has done to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. Secondly, the Plan will include what the City intends to accomplish related to providing accessible customer service by November, 2017. Thirdly, what processes the City will use to assess proposed policies, programs, practices and services, and also what it will do to assess, proposed enactments or by-laws. This includes the measures to ensure that all information provided by the City is accessible.

To complete the Plan, the City will consult with user groups that make up the Accessibility Working Group Sub-Committee. Once completed the Plan will be posted on the City's web-site at www.brandon.ca

As is required by the legislation a new plan will be developed every two years as the City then plans to meet the requirements of each new standard as it is released.

The City of Brandon Accessibility Policy

By the end of September 2016, the City will have written an up-to-date accessibility policy. In completing the policy there will be consultation with the Sub-Committee. The policy will be consistent with the Accessibility for Manitobans Act and the Human Rights Code. The policy will establish the City's program, ensure that accessibility aids are maintained and include an employee training program. The policy will ensure the documentation and public reporting of accessibility activities including the publishing of the policy on the City's web-site.

Work To Do - Auditing

There is work that we need to do. By September 30, 2016 the City should finish the auditing of City services. This will involve surveying City customers and employees to identify barriers to customer service. A baseline report on the City's accessibility will be written and published on the City's web-site at www.brandon.ca.

Work To Do – Actions Plans

There is work that we need to do. By November 2017 the City should have used the information from the baseline report to have developed action plans designed to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. These action plans should have been implemented and many of them completed in this time frame. Where it is not immediately possible to remove a barrier the City should have developed other ways to provide the service so that everyone has access to it. The action plans and progress will be shared on the City's web-site and updated as further progress is made.

Work To Do – Record Keeping

There is work that we need to do. By November 1, 2016 the City should have established a record keeping system so that data will be easily accessed and shared. This will include the City's Statement of Commitment and related policies. An ongoing record of meetings that have been held along with subsequent actions will be part of the database. The training that has been provided to City employees will be included as will a record of who has taken the training. The database will include identified barriers and what improvements are required and what actions have been taken. There will also be opportunity for public feedback through the City's web-site.

Work To Do - Training

There is work we need to do. By November 2017 the City should have developed and provided Accessibility Training for all of its 640 employees. Information about the training program will be provided on the City's web-site.

Work To Do – Plan Ready

There is work we need to do. By November 2016 the City should have its Accessibility Plan ready and published on the City's web-site. There should be systems in place to provide prominent notice of accessible facilities through the use of signs and messaging on the City's web-site. Accessible formats for information will be available on request and the City's documentation of the Accessibility Program will be shared. The City's web-site will have a public feedback process where anyone can comment on the City's work. The City will also establish a process to ensure that accessible locations are used when holding meetings and that physical and communication barriers are addressed when requested.

Next Steps

The next meeting of the Working Group Sub-committee will be June 21, 2016 at 4:30 pm in the Ted Snure Meeting room at 638 Princess Avenue.

The agenda for that meeting will be to simply seek input from the attendees regarding customer service barriers that make it difficult to access City of Brandon services. We will review the survey questions and have a discussion. For those who do not attend the meeting, the survey will be available to be completed on-line.

Proposed Survey

The next few slides will review the proposed survey. We will not discuss this in much detail today but this brief introduction will give everyone an idea of the questions we will be seeking answers to.

Introduction

"The City of Brandon provides many services to the residents of Brandon. Sooner or later everyone will try to make use of some particular City service. Sometimes things go well and sometimes things do not go well. In answering this survey, think of a time when you were trying to access a City service and you had some difficulty doing so. If there has been more than one occasion that you have experienced problems, please complete a separate survey for each incident."

The first question on the survey asks, 1. **What service were you accessing?** Then there is a long list of City services.

Cemetery

Drinking Water

Emergency Communications (911)

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Medical Services (Ambulance)

Engineering

Fire

Golf Course

Human Resources

Planning & Building Safety

Police

Recreational facilities and programs

Road Maintenance (pot holes, street sweeping)

Sanitation & Recycling

Sewage Treatment

Snow & Ice Clearing (roads & sidewalks)

Sportsplex

Transit

Treasury (paying utilities, tickets, taxes, budget info, submitting tender)

Website Access

Other

The second question is: 2. **What were you trying to do?** A space is provided for you to put your answer.

The third questions is: 3. **What was your experience?** A space is provided for you to describe what happened.

The fourth question is: 4. **What barrier made it difficult for you to access the service?** A space is provided for you to put your answer.

The fifth question is: 5. **Did you let any City employee know about the difficulty accessing the service?** You can then respond with Yes, No or N/A, which means not applicable.

The sixth question refers to your answer in question five and asks: 6. **Did the City address the barrier to your satisfaction?** You can then respond with Yes, No or N/A, which means not applicable.

Question seven is: 7. **What could the City have done better?** A space is provided for you to put your answer.

The eighth question asks you to: 8. **Provide any additional comments or feedback regarding this situation.** A space is provided for you to put your answer. This is the last question in the survey.

Wrapping It Up

Final question: What can we do from now on to make sure that we can communicate with each other?

Thank you.

Brian Kayes, Amanda Dupuis, Sandra Wallace