

## City of St. Catharines

### Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, April 27, 2011

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, April 27, 2011 at St. Catharines City Hall in the Ante Room at 1:30 p.m.

Present: Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson  
Diane Foster, Co-chairperson  
Bob Asham  
Ian Crawford  
Julie Morris  
Jennifer Noble  
David Reed  
Andy Waldron  
Mary Jane Waszynski

Regrets: Councillor Matthew Harris  
Sheryl Stewart  
Tony DiPaola  
Kevin Vallier

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office  
Steve Bittner, Transportation & Environmental Services  
Britney Williamson, Planning Services

Guest: James Enright, Prism Partners ~ lead consultant for the  
Performing Arts Centre

Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS): The FADS guideline was approved by the Region of Niagara in September 2005 and adopted by the City of St. Catharines Council on April 24, 2006 for use in municipal facilities.

1) Call to order:

Diane Foster, co-chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2) Introductions:

Everyone was welcomed and round table introductions were made.

3) Approval of Previous Minutes:

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for February 23, 2011 were reviewed and approved.

Moved by: Andy Waldron

Seconded by: Bob Asham

That the minutes of February 23, 2011 be approved.

CARRIED

4) Presentations / Discussions:

- a) Diane Foster welcomed James Enright of Prism Partners to MACOA's meeting noting that an opportunity to discuss key elements for access prior to concepts or drawings is appreciated. James Enright is the lead consultant with respect to the Performing Arts Centre (PAC) and he provided a brief outline noting that a public meeting will likely take place later in May to ensure that a broad scope of input is received from the public. The schematic design phase is forecast for June approximately, followed by a more detailed design phase with final preconstruction design forecast for the Fall of 2011. Staff suggested that each member around the table provide comment on what access issues they experience along with suggestions of best practices.

Synopsis of discussion and suggestions:

- Use of FADS and universal design audit required
- Currently, OBC 3.8 does not ensure adequate accessibility to people with disabilities
- Design is not just about wheelchair perspective, consider all disabilities (hearing, vision, dexterity, cognitive, mobility, etc.)
- Consider access issues of the aging population
- Consider both form and function, avoid retrofitting

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- Designs should consider full participation of patrons throughout the facility and its designed purpose (consider that employees may have a disability or actors may be actors with a disability)
- Consider clear and understandable signage and way-finding ('you are here' maps are helpful)
- Clear symbols on washrooms for male/female sex – sometimes not clearly understood or discernable symbols
- Use universal access symbols (shown in FADS)
- Ensure adequate lighting, listening assistive devices, clear audio, acoustics, print size, door widths, etc.
- All doorways (interior and exterior) must be equipped with PDO's
- Consider aging population; audio volume, font sizes, arm chairs, pedestrian distances, etc.
- Signage and way-finding are important – design with lighting, railings, etc. (spot carpets help way-finding)
- Mirrored walls should be avoided
- Placement of pillars with tactile and colour contrast surfaces (e.g large open spaces)
- Contrast all elements, matte finishes not glossy, reflective, avoid glare
- Any stairs should have railings on both sides, have delineated lighting, tactile / contrasted nosing etc.
- Consider service animals of patrons and that they may need a relief area in close proximity during intermissions too.
- Talking elevators with Braille panel and on door frames (consistent placement)
- Install evacuation chairs (City Hall example)
- Accessible payphones that have TTY capability (available from Bell)
- Accessible seating; choices of more than only the front or only the back, ensure seating beside for partners
- Patron seating should be integrated, not segregated
- Consider that mobility device seating heights might be higher than the seating behind them (blocked view)
- Consider the placement for mobility devices such as walkers in the seating scenario
- Seating throughout the facility should be a functional height, arm chairs, easy grasp, etc (FADS)
- Think in terms of arrival (transit, pedestrian or vehicle) locations onto the PAC grounds, into the facility and throughout the facility
- Accessible drop off area for transit and for vehicles passengers
- Coordinate location of parking with facility entrances; most direct route

- Tactile or truncate surfaces on pedestrian paths (exterior sidewalks) see FADS for ramp details
- Make all customer service counters accessible, avoid glass partitions with speaking holes
- Avoid slopes steeper than 1:20, avoid cross-slopes (dangerous to balance)
- Ensure FADS washrooms; contrasting materials, auto everything - lights, faucets, flush etc. Ensure heights and hanging locations – soap dispenser behind sinks are often out of reach.
- Include individual family (unisex) accessible washroom at each level/section as often support persons are an opposite sex (e.g. spouse) and ensure a duress alarm in individual washrooms
- Visitable linkages throughout PAC (City sections and Brock U sections)
- Marshalling area
- Easy, safe and barrier-free access to parking (e.g. new Carlisle Parking Garage)
- Engage MACOA throughout the design process (noted that PAC partner Brock University also has an accessibility advisory committee)
- Staff noted that MACOA will also provide comment through the site plan process as well
- Overall – when a facility is made accessible it benefits all users and creating a barrier-free environment never creates a barrier to others

Diane Foster thanked the members for their detailed and supportive input and thanked James Enright for attending MACOA's meeting, of which he stayed for the entire duration. MACOA asked staff to provide the list to Mr. Enright as soon as possible after the meeting. Prior to the meeting, staff provided Mr. Enright with a brief tour of the various accessibility improvements at City Hall and will send before/after photos to demonstrate barriers and removal. Additionally the hardcopy of FADS was provided and other supportive documents will be forwarded. James Enright noted that Michael Treacy of Diamond Schmitt Architects would likely attend a MACOA meeting in the near future.

- b) Accessible Tourism in Niagara and St. Catharines Steps Out initiative; reschedule for MACOA's June meeting.

## 5) Business Arising from Minutes:

### a) Accessibility Plan / AODA

- i. 2011 Accessibility Plan - Updated FADS 2006 and brochure;  
Staff noted that a corporate-wide distribution for the updated version of FADS has taken place. The launch meeting for the updated FADS invited key staff and hardcopy FADS were distributed. Additionally a supply of hardcopies were provided to both TES, Planning and the staff members on the Development Committee. Further to suggestions, a brochure was printed to preview and promote the FADS document outlining the benefits and concepts of FADS to architects, builders, developers, etc. The new FADS has also been provided to MACOA and posted on the accessibility page of the City's website.
- ii. MACOA's Sidewalk Action Statement, April 18<sup>th</sup> Council;  
Staff noted that a report from Planning Services went to Council on April 18<sup>th</sup> regarding site plan requirements for sidewalks around the property of the Alliance Church located at Vansickle and Rykert Streets. The report recommended that sidewalks be required on this site and included MACOA's full Sidewalk Action Statement. MACOA member Julie Morris spoke at the Council meeting asking Council to retain the recommended sidewalk requirement and further that it would be sensible for the City to install connecting link sidewalks from the edge of the church site to connect to an existing sidewalk on Rykert and along Vansickle to at least the next intersection (Montrose St) and ideally to Macturnbull Drive. Staff read the resolution of Council that noted the sidewalks at this site could be deferred until such time as the City had installed several long portions of sidewalk along both Vansickle and Rykert. Members noted that this in effect defers the church's obligation for the foreseeable future as there are existing sidewalks along one side of both of these streets however there is no pedestrian connection into or around the Alliance Church. MACOA noted the result will be an inaccessible church for pedestrians. Staff noted that MACOA is advisory to Council but that Council determines the resolution on items. An article from the St. Catharines Standard on this item was circulated and MACOA suggested that this might be

discussed further at their next meeting.

- iii. Provincial Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Forum, May 6 in Burlington;  
The Province is holding a number of forums throughout Ontario to engage AAC's in order to inform the members of the upcoming accessibility legislation and to engage their expertise in a number of areas; educating private sector businesses on the Accessible Customer Service Standard and recognizing the aging population as an important stakeholder for accessibility.

Staff has registered several MACOA members and several staff reps for this event. Details for transportation and timing will be arranged by staff on an individual basis. Attending members will provide an update at the next MACOA meeting.

b) March of Dimes

- i. Living with a Disability Conference – March 23;  
Staff and several members attended this conference and despite the snow storm that got worse throughout the day, there were many participants and members noted it was comprehensive and informative.
- ii. Breaking the Barriers Awards – June 1<sup>st</sup> at Market Square;  
MACOA will host an information / display table again this year. All members are invited to take turns at the MACOA table and staff will arrange lunch tickets for all members who attend. It was suggested that the MCSS video of City Hall's access improvements be shown or have a slide show of promo photos running.

March of Dimes continues to look for nominations so please share the electronic and hardcopy nomination forms with colleagues.

c) Updates:

- i. Site Plan Review;
  - Fairview Mall ~ staff met with Fairview Mall management and used MACOA's suggested primary and secondary pedestrian pathway overview as a starting point for further discussion on creating

improved pedestrian access from Geneva Street into the Mall. Mall management seemed receptive and took the site plan and suggested improvements to review further. Another meeting is forthcoming to determine more concise details.

- Lincoln Mall ~ staff noted a similar opportunity to improve pedestrian access and MACOA members are being asked for their input. The site plan drawings will be forwarded for review via email. MACOA's input will be sought at the May meeting.
- Ian Crawford and David Reed will provide a tutorial on how to review and comment on site plans at the next meeting.

ii. DDRC; no report.

iii. Niagara Inter-Municipal Specialized Transit advisory committee; no report

**6) Information Items:**

- a) Information items were circulated with the agenda package. Received.
- b) The Rick Hansen 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Relay will take place in 2011 and is tentatively scheduled to arrive in St. Catharines on November 13. Further to the information provided under "Information Items", applications are now being taken for "participants" and this can be done on-line at [www.rickhansenrelay.com](http://www.rickhansenrelay.com).
- c) Staff noted that the parking lot at the Dunlop Seniors Recreation Centre is being completely redesigned and repaved, including a higher ratio of accessible parking space. A new accessible front entrance with PDO's will be installed later this season.
- d) Shelley Stewart announced that her guide dog Fozzie is retiring after 9 working years at 11 years old. This will be his last meeting. Fozzie was congratulated on his outstanding career and service. He was a part of the many training sessions with Shelley for the corporate accessible customer service staff training. It was noted that Fozzie consistently achieved high ratings and applause at these sessions. Shelley Stewart noted that she is sad to have Fozzie retired, however he's earned it, and she looks forward

to bringing a new guide dog to MACOA in the future. She also noted that Fozzie would be retiring with MAOCA member Mary Jane Waszynski and plans are for him to become a service animal to support her work with the Niagara Centre for Independent Living. Fozzie did not receive a gold watch, however was presented with natural biscuit treats, a tug toy and a musical card on behalf of MACOA.

**7) Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, May 25, 2011 in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

**8) Adjournment:**

The meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility adjourned.

Moved by: Julie Morris

Seconded by: Andy Waldron

That this meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

CARRIED