

## **City of St. Catharines**

### **Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility (MACOA) MINUTES, Wednesday, June 22, 2011**

A meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility was held on Wednesday, June 22, 2011 at St. Catharines City Hall in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

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

Regrets: Councillor Matthew Harris

Staff: Diana Lecinski, Accessibility Coordinator, CAO's Office  
Cindy Upshall, Corporate Communications Officer, CAO's Office

Guests: David Sherlock, General Manager of St. Catharines Transit  
Commission

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:**

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

**2) Introductions:**

Everyone was welcomed and round table introductions were made. Shelley Stewart noted several items to MACOA;

- a) Sheryl Stewart recently resigned from MACOA due to career commitments and relocation. On behalf of MACOA thanks were expressed to Sheryl Stewart for her support and expertise as well as serving as co-chairperson to MACOA during her time with the committee. Staff will forward a certificate of appreciation to Sheryl Stewart on behalf of MACOA.
- b) Congratulations to Diane Foster on her recent Breaking the Barriers award from the March of Dimes. Also refer to Item 5)b) for further event details.
- c) Thank you to Ian Crawford and David Reed for their comprehensive presentation on the process of reviewing site plans from an accessibility perspective at MACOA's May meeting.
- d) Fozzie, Shelley Stewart's retired guide dog is enjoying his retirement with Mary Jane Waszynski and family. He is polishing his winning personality and dashing good looks to become a recognized service dog and join Mary Jane Waszynski at work with the Niagara Centre for Independent Living.

**3) Approval of Previous Minutes:**

The minutes of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility for May 25, 2011 were reviewed and approved.

Moved by: Julie Morris  
Seconded by: Bob Asham

That the minutes of May 25, 2011 be approved.

CARRIED

#### 4) Presentations / Discussions:

- a) Shelley Stewart welcomed David Sherlock, General Manager of St. Catharines Transit Commission. Transit has taken a keen partnership role in accessibility planning relating to transit and MACOA invited them to expand and update on these undertakings and future plans. Transportation, along with employment and information/communication standards, has recently been enacted under the AODA within the Integrated Accessibility Standard so this discussion is timely.

David Sherlock thanked MACOA for the invitation and spoke in detail about the history and governance of St. Catharines Transit. Since 1961 there has been conventional transit in the City and this September will mark its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There are seven Commissioners, five are citizens and two are City Councilors. All Commissioners are appointed by City Council for four year terms.

In the City's 2011 Accessibility Plan, Transit noted a fleet of accessible conventional buses as 58 of 63 buses, 8 paratransit vehicles and 2 paratransit vans. This is ahead of projected timeframes and brings fully accessible routes from 90% in the 2011 Accessibility Plan, to 95% currently and 100% for this September 1<sup>st</sup>. There are 1047 stops throughout St. Catharines and Thorold of which 150 have shelters. David Sherlock also reviewed the recently expanded Sunday transit service. Ridership during the expanded service periods is encouraging and this supports the need for increased service.

The inter-municipal transportation initiative is moving forward and was discussed. This would see public transit services joining St. Catharines, Welland and Niagara Fall with future plans possibly connecting all Niagara's municipalities. Further detailed information is available on the Region of Niagara's website [www.niagararegion.ca](http://www.niagararegion.ca).

Shelley Stewart asked each member around the table for their input or suggestions relating to accessible transportation. An overview of the in-depth discussions included;

- excellent drivers and customer service for almost all experiences
- securing mobility devices is becoming a streamlined process
- some concern about strollers using mobility device tie-down areas on buses, however some baby carriages do not fold demonstrating a need for best practices to be further developed

- occasional difficulty in booking paratransit trips demonstrates need for expanded budgets and service particularly during peak hours and users should retry booking as cancellations do occur
- bus stop pads need to be connective from the sidewalk and out to the street
- coordinated planning for physical improvements between the City and Transit was suggested with respect to accessible connectivity at stops and shelters
- snow clearing at pads and shelters can be a barrier, demonstrating a need for expanded budgets and support staff
- routes seem adequate and well aligned, however Lock 3 museum is not currently serviced by public transportation due to low ridership during trials
- two routes will service the new hospital on Fourth Avenue and First Street
- coordinate scheduling between future inter-municipal routes and GO Transit service at the St. Catharines train station
- audio/visual stop announcement system has improved quality and consistency after a recent manufacturer review and repair
- clear and easily understood customer service and information is important
- transit information should be easily accessed and understood in various formats (electronic, website, brochures, etc.)
- downtown terminal should have an accessible customer service counter and improved signage throughout
- downtown terminal does offer public TTY phones along with regular Bell payphones

Shelley Stewart thanked David Sherlock for attending. His participation in the discussions was appreciated. It was noted that Transit's commitment to accessibility and improvements are encouraging to patrons and can lead to increased ridership.

## 5) Business Arising from Minutes:

### a) Accessibility Plan / AODA

#### i. Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS);

Staff noted that this AODA Standard has been enacted as Ontario Regulation 191/11 effective July 1, 2011. The IAS was circulated to MACOA earlier in June. The IAS is comprised of 3 distinct sections; employment, transportation, information/communication. Staff has met with City staff in each of these key areas to prepare for compliance. The compliance timelines vary within each section. Some requirements are already in practice however may need to be formalized into policy. As planning moves forward MACOA will hold a key role similar to when the Accessible Customer Service Standard was enacted. One general piece within the IAS addresses an opportunity to create longer term accessibility plans with an annual overview report to the Province in lieu of the current requirement for an annual accessibility plan. This will require much discussion with MACOA and staff reps in order to develop a viable and realistic 3-5 year plan. Planning for this undertaking will be discussed over the next several meetings to establish next steps.

#### ii. Provincial AAC forum in Burlington;

MACOA members, Shelley Stewart, Diane Foster, Julie Morris, Mary Jane Waszynski and Jennifer Noble, staff Diana Lecinski and Jennifer McQuillan attended this Provincially hosted event. The overall purpose of this forum was to engage Accessibility Advisory Committee members in the promotion of accessibility throughout their communities as well as recognizing Ontario's aging population as having common ground with people with a disability who may not be older adults. Members noted that it was well worth attending; excellent and motivating speakers, clearly educational and reinforced the provincial commitment to creating an accessible Ontario by the year 2025.

- iii. Accessible Communications Guide;  
Shelley Stewart introduced Cindy Upshall, Corporate Communications Officer. She noted that Cindy Upshall and Diana Lecinski would be introducing a document that will be part of the foundation for staff training as the City moves forward in meeting the IAS requirements relating to information and communication. Staff led a discussion relating to the draft guide and received feedback and suggestions from MACOA members. These will be reflected into the final version of the document. The guide is specifically helpful in creating accessible range of documents.

Moved by: Diane Foster  
Seconded by: Kevin Vallier

That the Accessible Communications Guide be endorsed by the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility

CARRIED

b) March of Dimes

- i. Breaking the Barriers Awards – June 1<sup>st</sup> at Market Square;  
MACOA hosted an information / display table. Included were display boards filled with photos demonstrating accessibility at the City and a laptop showing the Ministry of Community and Social Services' video of the accessible improvements at St. Catharines City Hall. Also a supply of the 2011 Accessibility Plans, FADS, doodle pads promoting access and ergonomic pens were available as takeaways to attendees. Thank you to members who volunteered at the MACOA display and took part in the awards event. As noted at the beginning of the meeting Diane Foster received a Breaking the Barriers award.

c) Updates:

- i. Site Plan Review; no concerns or updates
- ii. DDRC; no meeting currently scheduled, no report.
- iii. Niagara Inter-Municipal Specialized Transit advisory committee;  
no meeting until fall, no report.

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**6) Information Items:**

- a) Information items were circulated with the agenda package. Included were details of the Province's new photo identification.

Staff reported that the first floor washrooms at City Hall are currently being renovated to FADS criteria and uses materials and contrasts similar to the other new washrooms at City Hall.

Construction at the new library/aquatics centre continues and duress alarms will be placed in all family washrooms and adult change tables will be installed in the pool change-rooms. Staff also noted meeting with Kris Jacobson of TES and Jerry McLaughlin of RCS regarding bringing accessible parking at city facility into compliance with the current size and ratios of the zoning by-law.

Bob Asham noted access issues at several parks that he attends for sports field events (Cambria and Linlake). Staff provided contact information at RCS and followed up with an email to RCS with respect to the access issues noted. Members suggested that a review of overall park access should be re-visited with RCS and staff was asked to invite RCS to a future meeting.

**7) Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, July 27, 2011 in Committee Room #1 at 1:30 p.m.

Members noted that MACOA historically does not meet in August however this will be finalized at the July meeting.

Linda Crabtree's presentation on accessible tourism and the "steps out" initiative is scheduled for July's meeting.

Long term accessibility plans will be discussed at July's meeting.

**8) Adjournment:**

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

Moved by: Julie Morris

Seconded by: Bob Asham

That this meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

**CARRIED**

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