

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS OF THE
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2019, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
SIXTH FLOOR BOARDROOM, 612
NORQUAY BUILDING, 401 YORK AVENUE**

Present: Jim Baker (Chairperson), Jim Derksen, John Graham, Martin Harder, Scott Jocelyn, Dianna Scarth, Jesse Turner, Yutta Fricke (DIO), John Wyndels (DIO), Emily Walker (DIO)

Absent: Nil

The chair congratulated the Council on its great progress on the Information and Communications Standard. Once all remaining standards are sent to government, future Council work will include reviewing the Customer Service Standard to begin in January 2020.

Council discussed final feedback for the IC report section by section, which will be sent to government. They requested the DIO post the IC committee's initial report, which can be hyperlinked to the Council's report to government. Council agreed to embed comments throughout its report to government to explain the rationale for its decisions.

The Transportation Chair reported to Council on the proposed standard and acknowledged the excellent work of her SDC. The chair reviewed the standard section by section. Council congratulated the Transportation SDC for its work.

The Committee reviewed Ontario's integrated transportation standard noting the differences. Overall, Manitoba's proposed standard is close to Ontario's but was reorganized to make it more applicable to our province. The Committee also reviewed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and a few US states with progressive transportation services.

Under the definitions section of the standard, Council discussed the difference between "priority seating" and "courtesy seating". There are differences of opinion among riders regarding this topic. If there are strollers on the bus, they may take up the designated spaces for passengers with disabilities.

Council discussed accessibility training and whether drivers should be obligated to help people with disabilities needing assistance to strap down their wheelchairs. Winnipeg Transit is piloting three other systems to secure users in power wheelchairs. One example is where the rider backs into a designated area and presses a button for a bar to come down to secure a wheelchair. A rider does not require much dexterity to secure themselves. Another pilot system involved the rider getting straps in from the ground to secure a chair, which may not be accessible for everyone.

In the section dealing with fares, the committee added a section stating that drivers can assist with fare payment at the request of a rider. Riders accompanied by support persons should not have to pay an additional fare. Current Winnipeg Transit policy requires additional payment for a support person. On Winnipeg Transit Plus, an attendant rides for free whereas a companion does not.

With respect to priority seating and mobility aid spaces, Council noted that, when these spaces are full, individuals with disabilities may have to wait for the next bus. They decided that a waiting period of over 25 minutes was unfair.

In Ontario the signage for courtesy and priority spaces is a lot clearer. If someone is already in the courtesy seating section and there is a stroller in priority seating, potentially the stroller would have to leave the bus. The Committee wanted transportation providers to develop policies, and perhaps limit the sizes of strollers that people can bring on to buses.

In relation to categories of eligibility, Council thought that 14 days was a reasonable timeframe for a transportation to receive supplemental information to support an application for service. Transit Plus allows 21 days, which the Transportation Committee felt was too long.

Council received an update on the work of the DoPS committee. The DoPS Chair will present his SDC's report to Council at the end of September.

The next Council meeting will take place on September 25, 2019.