

CPS2014-0138
ATTACH 3, RECORD 1

Accessible Housing Society
CALGARY



Good morning. My name is Jeff Dyer and I am the Executive Director of Accessible Housing. We imagine a future where everyone has a home and belongs in community. To achieve this, we open doors to homes that are accessible and affordable for people with limited mobility.

I am speaking this morning on behalf of 37,000 Calgarians who experience housing insecurity and limited mobility.

Allow me to paint the picture for you:

There is a new spinal cord injury in Calgary every week of the year. Every day, three more people in Canada are diagnosed with MS. Every day, children are born in our city with cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and there are 99 individuals who cannot exit hospital due to having no suitable housing. For these Calgarians, there is no place to call home.

Let's take a look at Calgary

- 17% of all Calgarians have a disability.ⁱ Those disabilities that impact mobility are the most prevalent, as reported by about 8% of Calgarians.ⁱⁱ Based on our current population, this is roughly 92,000 people. Mobility impairment may be caused by a number of factors, such as disease, an accident, or a congenital disorder and may be the result from neuro-muscular and orthopedic impairments. For instance, spinal cord injury, paralysis, muscular dystrophy and cerebral palsy.
- These Calgarians earn lower incomes, are likelier to live alone, and are generally older than those without disabilities.ⁱⁱⁱ
- These Calgarians report a significant level of concern with housing affordability and safety.^{iv} 40% are concerned about not having enough money for housing.^v
- Those with disabilities are four times likelier to use subsidized housing and twice as likely to use homeless shelters compared to those without disabilities.^{vi}
- In 2006, there were 14,000 renter and 81,000 homeowner households with the presence of a disability in need of affordable housing in 2006.^{vii}
- Half of these renters earn less than \$20,000, placing them at significant risk for homelessness.^{viii}
- Only 3% of all affordable housing is accessible, leaving a 5% gap. A gap that will only grow as our population ages. By 2019, approximately 198,495 people over 15 will be living with a disability in Calgary.^{ix}
- Stepping back now to all Calgarians, about 10.6% are living in poverty
- One in four Calgary households were paying more than 30% of their income on shelter in 2011.
- This is "more than they can afford" according to CMHC.

- o Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Housing being their primary focus.
- o Affordable Housing "It's the No. 1 issue for us right now," Naheed Nenshi
- o Adam Legge, CEO of the Chamber of Commerce suggests that *"the rental vacancy rate in Calgary is essentially at zero – 0.3% – in other words rental accommodations are near impossible to come by. And it's getting worse. This last year we actually lost more than 270 units out of the rental supply, the 10th consecutive year of declining rental stock in Calgary."* Legge Once again, only 3% of all of these units are accessible.

The demand for accessible housing is growing and communities must respond to this demand. We are experiencing changing demographics, rural to urban migration, and zoning regulations on existing and future housing stock. How will we adapt to ensure we can all age in place?

Accessible house design is design that will accommodate everyone, including people with disabilities. Accessible housing includes houses that are minimally accessible, houses that can easily be made accessible at a later date, and houses that are completely accessible with power door openers, large bathrooms and so on.

As a starting point, homes have to have features that allow most people to visit, including level entry, wider doors throughout the entrance level and a washroom on the main floor.

As a goal, homes have to include open turning spaces within rooms, wheel-in shower stalls, kitchen work surfaces with knee space below, lever door handles that everyone can use, stairways that feature handrails that are easy to grasp, and easy-to-use appliances.

My Ask of You:

We need a municipal housing strategy that dramatically increases the available stock of affordable and accessible housing. To increase affordability, collaborate with developers, social agencies and investors to find innovative ways to build new housing supply. Consider inclusionary zoning, density bonusing, expedited permitting, reduction in parking requirements and secondary suites. To increase accessibility, ensure all new development permits include mandatory minimums, enforced visitability and provide meaningful incentives for universal design.

The Mayor's Affordable Housing Strategy needs to include units that are purpose built to reflect the current demand of 8 out of every 100 Calgarians. Even more, it would be wise for us to increase the stock to reflect an aging population. Commercial development is bound by law to ensure access to all. Housing should follow suit, ensuring that all Calgarians can be home and belong in community. Please open doors to homes that are accessible and affordable for people with limited mobility.

Thank you.

¹ The City of Calgary. (2006). Signposts II: A Survey of the Social Issues and Needs of Calgarians - Persons with Disabilities Theme Report. Available online:

http://www.calgary.ca/_layouts/cocis/DirectDownload.aspx?target=http%3a%2f%2fwww.calgary.ca%2fCSPS%2fCNS%2fDocuments%2fsignposts%2fSign%2520Post%2520II%2520-%2520PERSONS%2520WITH%2520DISABILITIES.pdf&noredirect=1&sf=1.

ⁱⁱ Statistics Canada. (2008). Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Available online:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-628-x/89-628-x2007002-eng.htm>.

ⁱⁱⁱ The City of Calgary. (2006). Signposts II: A Survey of the Social Issues and Needs of Calgarians - Persons with Disabilities Theme Report.

^{iv} The City of Calgary. (2006). Signposts II: A Survey of the Social Issues and Needs of Calgarians - Persons with Disabilities Theme Report.

^v The City of Calgary. (2006). Signposts II: A Survey of the Social Issues and Needs of Calgarians - Persons with Disabilities Theme Report.

^{vi} The City of Calgary. (2006). Signposts II: A Survey of the Social Issues and Needs of Calgarians - Persons with Disabilities Theme Report.

^{vii} The City of Calgary. (2008). Research Brief #5: Housing Affordability in Calgary for Households with the Presence of Disability in the Household (PDIH). Available online:

http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Documents/homelessness/rb-05_housing_affordability_disab.pdf.

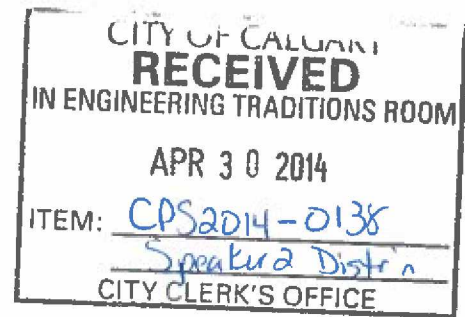
^{viii} The City of Calgary. (2008). Research Brief #5: Housing Affordability in Calgary for Households with the Presence of Disability in the Household (PDIH). Available online:

http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Documents/homelessness/rb-05_housing_affordability_disab.pdf.

^{ix} City of Calgary. (2009). City of Calgary Population Outlook 2009-2019' City of Calgary data for housing trends. Available online:

<http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Pages/Social-research-policy-and-resources/Affordable-housing-andhomelessness/Research-on-affordable-housing.aspx>.

Deaf & Hear Alberta



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Accessibility

It's the law. The Canadian Human Rights Act recognizes that persons with disabilities have a right to full integration and participation in society and that includes the right to accessible workplaces, health services, public transit as well as all public buildings.

According to the Supreme Court of Canada, all health regions, municipal services, employers and service providers have a legal duty to accommodate people with disabilities to enable them to work or to access an essential service such as municipal events and other city related services.

Statistics

Deaf Statistics

- 1% of the population is Deaf, approximately 12,000 in Calgary.

Hard of Hearing Statistics:

- 23% of the population is Hard of Hearing, approximately 275,000 Calgarian's
- For those over 65 years, 50% suffer from hearing loss
- Hearing Loss is the fastest growing disability related to aging in Canada
- 1 in 5 youth (from 7 – 17 years of age) are losing their hearing due to Noise Induced Hearing Loss – music with Ear buds – always plugged in - listening to music too loud, too long

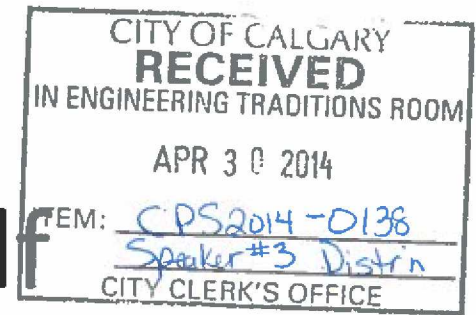
Accessibility and what this means for these groups?

1. Deaf – identify as a distinct culture, American Sign Language (ASL) required for communication. Requires interpreter to translate ASL to English and vice versa. The role of an interpreter is to provide accurately conveyed messages between two different languages for Deaf and hearing individuals. The act of the interpreting occurs when a hearing person speaks and an interpreter renders the speaker's meaning into American Sign Language. This also happens in reverse to provide oral language for the hearing people. It is important to have an interpreter provided and paid for by the City when police, fire and other related municipal services involved.

2. Hard of Hearing –Struggling to hear within the hearing world. Are able to hear better one on one (lip-reading - no background noise) but really struggle in large group settings where acoustics are loud and/or background noise exists. **Captioning** for hard of hearing people really enhances effective communication. Captioning is effective for people with different types of hearing challenges, or anyone who struggles with spoken English. Captioning is the most accurate voice to text technology that provides over 200 words per minute that is projected onto a screen to view what is being said real time. This allow any person with a hearing loss to have a full inclusion to any event hosted by City of Calgary where they feel confident, included and empowered to be part of.

Impacts:

Deaf: speak ASL, fluent in their speech and understanding, the Deaf world is very small, isolated, miss many opportunities for incidental learning that the hearing world has. The Deaf community currently has no interpreter access to feel welcomed, will not know what is going on at the event where they cannot participate to be inclusive with the public. It is recommended to inform the Deaf community where interpreters are provided to welcome them to the public event to be included.



Let Me Introduce Myself

- Visually impaired – legally blind
- A white cane / guide dog user
- Live in ward 13
- Highly mobile and independent thanks to my skills, determination and an inclusive Calgary
- 75% of my travel is done using Calgary Transit
- I am proud to be a volunteer on ACA + both sub-committees
- Thank You for giving me the opportunity

Some Ideas To Consider

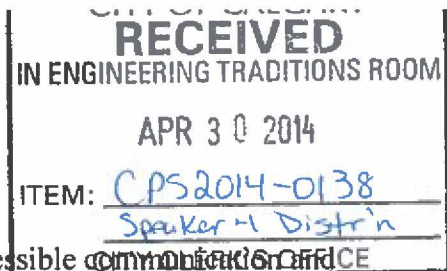
- The **WHO** says we will all experience a disability of some sort, at some time in our lives, be it temporary or permanent
- The disabled community in Calgary is currently 225,000 + people and growing
- The CNIB says currently 3% of the general population is visually impaired and that number is expected to double by 2020
- That the disabled community is more active, independent and engaged in main stream society than ever before
- That a mind shift about accessible thinking is required to include all 3 facets of disability; Physical, Sensory and Cognitive

Access Calgary

- Is an essential service to its 15,000 + users
- In 2013 1.3 million trips
- 88 trips per user/ year
- That's an increase of 40% from 2006 which was 63 trips
- An amazing accommodation rate of 99%
- Don't let that fool you, 13,000 trip requests could not be met
- Access Calgary needs help keeping up with growing demand and the logistical challenges of its daily operations
- The audit results are quite clear, it's a growing business that needs addition funding for growth and technology infrastructure improvement

How This Last Winter Impacted Me

- This last winter was incredibly challenging, dangerous, severely limiting and costly
- The problem, a lack of snow and ice control on city side walks made accessing public transit dangerous and near impossible
- Why should this happen in a winter city?
- I believe the root cause lies in the wording of the “ Snow and Ice Control Policy Document”
- *“ The aim of the Snow and Ice Control Policy is to provide reasonable winter driving conditions for vehicles/cycles that are:*
- *properly equipped for winter driving; and*
- *are operated in a manner consistent with good winter driving habits. “*
- No mention of pedestrians any where in this policy
- Why is it that pathways, LRT stations and the City Hall complex have excellent snow removal while I cant make to the bus stop 300 meters from my front door?
- At any given time it was 30 + days before the side walks where cleared



Good morning,

It is always a pleasure to come before you to speak of effective accessible communication. Today, I am back to say thank you. However, the work is not done... there is still so much more to do.

To date, the City of Calgary has made Accessible communication as:

- ☐ part of the City of Calgary accessibility Policy;
- ☐ a primary foundation block to Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) – Strategic Plan;
- ☐ part of the physical Council Chamber where there are two screens displaying “Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)... some may call it captioning so I will refer to it as CART Captioning;
- ☐ City Council public meetings broadcast on Shaw Cable channel are captioned for those persons wishing to understand the dialogue at council;
- ☐ necessary for public civic events such as celebrations at the Olympic Civic Plaza and City of Calgary sponsored public events;
- ☐ successful, in the most recent, implementation of Text-9-1-1 for the Calgary region; (Public Safety Communications have implemented the Text to 911 service for the deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired, so that in an emergency situation the 911 centres will have the ability to converse using text messaging. The committee provided guidance and education on this process.)
- ☐ Calgary Transit’s integration of LRT Audible and Visual Announcements on all trains and platforms to increase communication;
- ☐ part of Customer Service & Communications continued work on engaging citizens of Calgary through Plain Language Policies (using the disability “lens”) for communication;
- ☐ Crisis Communication for individuals with disabilities that require communication access in the event of a city emergency has been identified and strategies outlined;
- ☐ a means of access for me at this committee meeting so that I may present and understand any and all dialogue and for others should they wish to participate in civic business.

It cannot stop there, Calgary needs to realize and understand the importance of effective accessible communication for all people. It is not just for the city government to realize but also for all of the community... public and private sector.

Communication access is for internal and external business for employees and citizens alike; after all, everyone is important.

Captioning and CART captioning are becoming more in demand. In the private sector, we see the visual broadcast medium (television) will soon be providing captioning of programming and advertising on a 24-hour daily basis starting this fall, a vast improvement for the current policy, allowing all people to be engaged at any time of day.

For the City of Calgary, I strongly suggest that council members holding periodic community talks have accessible communication budgeted into annual costing and **be used accordingly**. If members of council need assistance as to what is needed... ask. There are people within the city bureaucracy who are very aware of how to provide access and who can connect to others with public and private sector for support. On a personal note, I have attended a few small community gatherings by our Councillor where a microphone for both the Councillor and the audience would be most helpful for larger gather CART captioning would be appropriate so that all of us have the opportunity to participate. This also holds true and needs to happen with any City community engagement session

During civic elections, that effective accessible communication be a **MUST** so that all citizens have the ability to participate, if they wish, in the democracy of our City Government. In the past, this particular accessibility window is either minimal or completely missed. It is important that election campaigns be budgeted for full accessible. It is also important for those of us wanting the ability to participate in Town Halls and any Ward meetings.

I am pleased to see in the report tabled today that the ACA Goals & Strategies:

Strategy 3.7: ACA will provide input into Crisis Communication in preparation for emergency situations, so all disability needs will get the information they require.

This is truly comforting to see so that all citizens have access regardless where in the City of Calgary. We need access for all in the business and recreational environment, as well as in the service portion of city business. Please never assume and if in doubt... ask. All of us have a lot to learn so that accessibility is not a special factor but is a reality in daily living for all people.

Thank you.

Red Print: Not part of the verbal presentation.