Introduction

measuring**up**
EDMONTON

open your doors to everyone

Guide to Accessibility and Universal Design for your:

✓ home
✓ community
✓ business
✓ organization

THE CITY OF
Edmonton

Acknowledgements

The following organizations and individuals were instrumental in creating and/or supporting Measuring Up Edmonton.

- **City of Edmonton Measuring Up Project Team**

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- Paul Tubbe

Legal Notice/Disclaimer

The Measuring Up toolkit and resource guide contains information about specialized services, organizations and information that can be used to improve the accessibility of businesses and organizations in Edmonton. The City of Edmonton developed the toolkit and resource guide as an informative resource for those interested; however, does not endorse any of the organizations listed. If you would like to suggest resources to be included in the toolkit, please call 780-496-4910.

If you require further information about any of the information included in the resource guide, please contact the organization listed directly or visit their website.

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Introduction to Toolkit

Edmonton is for everyone. This is a vibrant city with an exceptional quality of life that welcomes people of all abilities and backgrounds. Since our community's early days, much has changed in terms of our awareness about the diversity of our population's needs.

Municipal facilities and other infrastructure are now being planned to ensure accessibility for all persons. While we have made great strides with municipal bylaws and legislation in Edmonton, there is still more that we can do.

In the mid-1980s a new model for building and infrastructure design was developed, called 'Universal Design.' This model offers ways to enhance access and inclusion beyond physical requirements, to include a broader range of needs such as sight or hearing impairments, developmental disabilities and the impacts of aging.

Universal design provides flexible, inclusive ways to design building features, programs and services that increases accessibility for all individuals. Our hope is that in using this assessment toolkit, you will see how incorporating universal design into your organization will improve our community as a whole.

How Did We Get Here?

- In 2008, Mayor Stephen Mandel requested information on Vancouver's Measuring Up initiative.

- City of Edmonton Administration and the Advisory Board on Services for People with Disabilities hosted a two day workshop to generate interest for a similar initiative for Edmonton.

- Guest speakers Monica Kay and Paul Tubbe from Vancouver were on hand to describe their project and answer questions.

- In 2009, Administration began researching Vancouver's process to determine how Edmonton could follow their lead.

- In 2010, work began on a framework for the Measuring Up Edmonton toolkit.

- Consultations with public and disability organizations and agencies assisted in further direction for Administration to complete an assessment toolkit.

- In April 2010, the Community Services Committee of City Council approved Administration moving forward with the Measuring Up project.

About Various Levels of Ability

When we think about persons with disabilities, we often picture someone using a wheelchair. In reality, there are many types of barriers that people deal with everyday. Visual impairment, hearing impairment, amputation are some of the disabilities that also may require various levels of adaptation.

You can help. By reviewing your environment through the eyes of persons with disabilities, or better yet, by asking someone you know who has a disability to join you in your review, you can find simple ways to make a big difference. Businesses can attract more customers, community centers can engage more participants, and residents can welcome more visitors.

How to Use the Measuring Up Toolkit

Purpose of the Toolkit

The purpose of the toolkit is to help you assess and improve the accessibility and inclusion in your environment. The information collected is for your personal use to identify areas of potential improvement, or highlight your existing efforts to be barrier free. The toolkit helps to raise awareness of universal design and enforce its affect on how we work, play and live.

It also provides you with information and resources that will address areas that may need improvement.

Use the toolkit:

- To make your communities, homes or businesses more inclusive to the public.
- Assess public, nonprofit and private sector organizations, buildings, renovations, facilities designs and services.
- To increase the number of potential users/customers.
- The information in the toolkit is not just for someone with a disability. Accessibility features that your organization or community may currently have, or those you choose to improve, will also benefit parents with strollers, seniors, delivery personnel, or anyone requiring easier access to facilities and services.

It's easy to get started:

- Read the introduction and toolkit before beginning your assessment.
- Each section relies on information gathered in the previous section. No section stands alone; they work together to contribute to universal design.

    For example:

    Hotel evacuation plans are present in every hallway and room but are they in multiple formats? Are they at an accessible site or height? Do they use clear font and plain language?

- This example combines elements from the "Safety and Support Services" and "Access to Information" sections in the toolkit.

- Not all sections will apply to each person or organization, but reading all sections can help you understand how to apply the information in a different situation or help with your assessment in other areas.

- There are five sections in the toolkit. Each section contains many statements for you to measure, indicated by the check mark icon.

This toolkit helps you look at your space through various viewpoints to consider the many ways in which we can make our environments more welcoming and user-friendly. Thank you for your interest in making your business, home or community more inclusive to all residents and visitors.

"The City of Edmonton is making accessibility a priority in all areas. Encouraging full community participation through good design makes Edmonton a welcoming place where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy all that our city has to offer."

— *Mayor Stephen Mandel,*
City of Edmonton

Let's go! It only takes 1 – 2 hours to do the initial assessment:

- Assess your space and organization using the rating scale provided.
- Space is provided at the end of each statement for your notes and comments.
- There is also an Action Plan at the end of each section where you can record your ideas for any necessary improvements, follow up or future plans.

Helpful Tips:

- Refer to the glossary if there are terms you do not understand.
- Refer to the resource guide for more information and ideas on the topics presented in the toolkit.
- Consider that there are often innovative ways to accomplish accessibility and inclusiveness.
- Keep in mind that your perceptions of your space, products or services may be different from those of your clients, users or customers. Consider asking them for their opinions when doing the assessment.

There is no right answer. Do what you feel is right in order to increase accessibility and inclusion. Remember, any changes or improvements you make now will benefit you and others in the future.

How to Use the Rating Scale

Note: It may be helpful to detach this page to follow along as you complete the assessment.

To guide your assessment, use the criteria below as you work through the toolkit. Throughout the toolkit, the terms **accessibility** and **inclusion** are used frequently and are meant to include the following key elements:

Accessibility	Inclusion
- appropriate	- appropriate
- available	- choice
- support	- interaction
- clarity	- participation
- ease of use	- feelings of belonging

The rating scale on the next page provides a choice of five star ratings for you to use to determine your level of accessibility and inclusion.

1 ★ Poor			
Very little accessibility	Very little inclusion	Physical spaces do not meet Alberta Building code	Very few accommodations made for people with disabilities
2 ★ ★ Fair			
Some accessibility	Some inclusion	Physical spaces meet Alberta Building code in some but not all areas	Some accommodations made for people with disabilities
3 ★ ★ ★ Average			
Mid-range accessibility	Mid-range inclusion	Physical spaces meet but do not exceed Alberta Building code	Average accommodations made for people with disabilities
4 ★ ★ ★ ★ Good			
Good accessibility	Good inclusion	Physical spaces meet code in all areas and exceed Alberta Building code in some	Good accommodations made for people with disabilities
5 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent			
Ideal accessibility	Ideal inclusion	Physical spaces exceed Alberta Building code in all areas	Excellent accommodations for people with disabilities\n\nFunctional for all users\n\n* Universal Design

Example
(from the "Physical Development and Transportation" section)

Measurable Statement:

Human-made structures incorporate the highest degree of accessibility.

⭐1 ⭐2 ⭐③ ⭐4 ⭐5

- This statement is measuring accessibility and inclusion.

- For example, the building you are assessing has a path to the main entrance that is wide and has curb cut access from the parking lot. The main entrance has two steps and the accessible level entrance is on the side of the building, however, the path to the accessible entrance is often blocked by snow or delivery trucks. There are power doors at both entrances and handrails on the steps.

- The appropriate score for your business, based on the above example is 3/5 stars.

Comments:

Use information found in the resource guide and fill out the action plan to see if and how we might need to improve.

Sample Action Plan

What we are we doing well now?

We have a curb cut and wide sidewalks. We have power doors and a level entrance. We do have handrails on the steps (not sure if they are up to code). There are colour contrast strips on the nosing of the steps.

What is missing? Are there gaps?

I noticed there were no signs indicating where the accessible entrance is. The accessible entrance is often blocked. The main entrance is not level.

How can we improve?

Handrails meet the requirements in the Alberta Building Code, however I would like to go with the suggestions for extending the handrails at the top and bottom from the Barrier Free Design Guidelines for safety. The Barrier Design Guide also suggests that the colour strips on the steps also include texture, this would ensure improved access for persons with a visual impairment. I also noticed there is a lot of space at the front of our building which could incorporate a ramp to ensure that visitors can access the building at all times and the side door could be used for deliveries only. (Barrier Free Design Guidelines suggest 1/16 slope whereas the Alberta Building Code requires a 1/12. Find out why 1/16 would be better?)

What resources are needed to get started?

- Review resource guide, specifically for information on signs, building elements (ramps, railings and stairs).
- Involve my manager to get a budget.
- Get quotes from different contractors (3).
- Prioritize renovations based on available funds and cost of each element as well the greatest need to enhance inclusion for our customers.
- Check to see if other renovations are planned and if these accessibility improvements could be included at the same time to save costs.
- Consider peak traffic times during the year to determine the best time for renovations.
- Need to have quotes, budget and check in with building manager within the next three months.

*Note: Your action plan can include any information that you feel is necessary to help you decide how to be more inclusive. Also remember to check the resource guide!

Adding tactile and colour strips on the steps improves accessibility and safety while adding to the aesthetics of stairs.

About Universal Design

Universal design principles enhance everyone's access and participation in the community. These principles assist in the integration of features that meet the needs of as many users as possible. Ideally, individuals, businesses and organizations should incorporate the following criteria wherever possible:

- Objects and spaces use elements that serve the greatest number of users possible.

- Full accessibility, adaptability, inclusion and freedom from barriers are all provided.

- Needs of citizens with all degrees of sensory awareness, all types of movement, all levels of physical and intellectual functions are recognized and incorporated into the design.

- All Individuals are encouraged to participate in the choices affecting our community.

"If we are to achieve a culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so we are a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place."

— *Margaret Mead*
Inclusive Leisure Services

The Seven Principles

Principle One: Equitable Use

The design is available and marketed to people with diverse abilities.

Guidelines:

    1a. Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.

    1b. Avoid segregating or stigmatizing users.

    1c. Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.

    1d. Make the design appealing to all users.

Principle Two: Flexibility In Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Guidelines:

    2a. Provide choice in available methods.

    2b. Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.

    2c. Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision.

    2d. Provide adaptability to the user's pace.

Principle Three: Simple And Intuitive Use

Design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

Guidelines:

3a. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.

3b. Be consistent with user expectations and intuition?.

3c. Accommodate differing literacy and language abilities.

3d. Arrange information according to its importance.

3e. Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

Principle Four: Perceptible Information

The design communicates information effectively to the user, regardless of the user's ambient conditions or sensory abilities.

Guidelines:

4a. Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for presentation of essential information.

4b. Provide contrast between essential information and its surroundings.

4c. Maximize "legibility" of essential information.

4d. Provide clear and concise instructions and directions.

4e. Accommodate, through the use of techniques or devices, people with sensory limitations.

Principle Five: Tolerance For Error

The design minimizes adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Guidelines:

5a. Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors (mistakes?): most used and accessible elements; eliminate hazardous, isolated or shielded elements, isolated, or shielded.

5b. Provide warnings of hazards and errors.

5c. Attempt to prevent mistakes. Provide fail safe features.

5d. Encourage focus in vigilant tasks.

Principle Six: Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, with minimal fatigue.

Guidelines:

6a. Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.

6b. Use reasonable operating forces.

6c. Minimize repetitive actions.

6d. Minimize constant physical exertion.

Principle Seven: Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate space is provided for program implementation, regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Guidelines:

7a. Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing participant.

7b. Ensure access to all program components for participants.

7c. Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.

7d. Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

Information courtesy of North Carolina State University, The Center for Universal Design. Reprinted with permission.

The colour scheme on this pillar makes it easy to detect for someone with low vision.

Universal Design allows for safe pedestrian access:

- Plan and design to eliminate objects in pedestrian zones such as poles, signal cabinets and signage.
- Provide appropriate and accessible routes around objects.

Furniture Zone　　**Pedestrian Zone**　　**Frontage Zone**