

# Memo



**Date:** March 7, 2011  
**File:** 0615-20  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Policy and Planning - Accessibility Advisory Committee - Staff Liaison (BD)  
**Subject:** Terminology - Persons with Disabilities

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**Recommendation:**

THAT Council receive for information the report from the Accessibility Advisory Committee staff liaison, dated March 7, 2011 recommending different terminology be used in City publications and signage when referencing persons with disabilities;

AND THAT Council directs staff to revise all new and reprinted City publications and signage to include the terminology "Persons with Disabilities" in place of "Handicapped" or "Disabled".

**Purpose:**

The intention of this report is to recommend that Council direct Staff to update all new and reprinted City publications and signage using appropriate terminology for persons with disabilities.

**Background:**

The Accessibility Advisory Committee requests that Council ensure the City uses consistent terminology when referring to "Persons with Disabilities" for all documentation and signage used by the City of Kelowna. It has been noted that some City documentation may still employ titles and references using the term "handicapped".

The City of Kelowna webpage (Residents >Community Planning) refers to a document called Disabilities - The Right Words. This City of Kelowna document correctly notes the following distinctions:

**The disabled • people with disabilities.** There is no such group as "the disabled," only people with disabilities. To use the word "disabled" is a label and a stereotype because a person's disability may affect only one aspect of his or her life. Try telling a wheelchair basketball player that she is disabled. A person may feel extremely able, just unable to walk.

**Handicap • disability.** A disability is a personal functional limitation. A handicap is an environmental or attitudinal barrier. For example, a wheelchair user is handicapped by stairs but if an elevator or a ramp is available, there is no handicap. The word handicap refers back to the days when people with disabilities were forced to beg - cap in hand - to survive.

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Generally, people do not like to be labeled, so it follows that members of our community who have disabilities prefer to be recognized for their individual abilities and contributions rather than broad generalizations.

Community and Neighbourhood Programs Manager noted that they have been using the “*Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability Terminology*” as the standard for their signage and publications and are supportive of the recommendations in this report.

It is noted that the Federal and Provincial governments in their publications and website use the term “persons with disabilities”. The Accessibility Advisory Committee asks that the City of Kelowna incorporate this wording in all new and reprinted material as a further example to the rest of the community.

**Internal Circulation:**

Stephen Fleming - City Clerk / Legislative Services  
 Danielle Noble - Urban Land Use Manager  
 Carla Stephens - Community & Media Relations Director  
 Randy Cleveland - Director / Infrastructure Planning  
 Louise Roberts-Taylor - Manager, Community & Neighbourhood Programs

**Legal/Statutory Authority:**

S.141 Community Charter

**Existing Policy:**

Official Community Plan - Chapter 17 - 17.1 - Accessibility Policies

17.1.7 Awareness. Continue to support the Central Okanagan "Access Awareness" Team and/or any other appropriate agencies to organize and promote initiatives to raise awareness and improve accessibility in Kelowna;

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

Minimal financial implications if any are expected. City signage for parking and recreational facilities already uses the correct terminology. It is expected that the terminology will be implemented as publications, forms, and correspondence are replaced or updated.

**Community & Media Relations Comments:**

The Community and Media Relations Department (CMR) is working on a style guide which will include any Council direction. CMR is not in a position to implement a communications plan however, are available for advice and direction.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

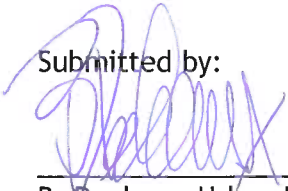
**Personnel Implications:**

**External Agency/Public Comments:**

**Alternate Recommendation:**

**Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:**

Submitted by:



B. Decloux, Urban Land Use Planner

Reviewed by:



T. Eichler, Manager, Community Planning

Approved for Inclusion:



S. Bagh, Director, Policy and Planning

