

**Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting
Agenda**

Wednesday, November 22, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

Open to public attendance in Committee Room G

Lower Level, City Hall

Committee members may attend electronically

We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

	Pages
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</u> The Chair will open the meeting and provide a land acknowledgement.	
2. <u>INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKERS</u>	
3. <u>CHANGES TO THE AGENDA</u> Additions or deletion of items.	
4. <u>ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u>	
4.1 September 27, 2023	3
4.2 October 25, 2023	10
5. <u>REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS</u> Staff and guest reports and presentations for information, discussion, and/or action	
6. <u>NEW BUSINESS</u> Items added to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.	
6.1 Local Community Accessibility Grant Application Staff lead: Hailey Finnigan, Communications Coordinator, Office of the CAO	
7. <u>END OF MEETING</u>	

8. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

No further meetings are currently scheduled.



Accessibility Advisory Committee

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

Open to public attendance in Committee Room G

Lower Level, City Hall

Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	Chair
Karen Basran	Human Resources Business Partner
Anne Bélanger	Committee Member
Taryn Bruckshaw*	Committee Member
Iris Cheng*	Committee Member
Hazel Fitzpatrick*	Committee Member
Nancy Kato	Committee Member
Vic Leach	Committee Member
Karla Olson	Committee Member
Julia Schoennagel	Committee Member

REGRETS:

Shannon Dolton	Committee Member
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STAFF PRESENT:

Hailey Finnigan	Communications Coordinator, Office of the CAO
Christopher Koth	Manager of Programs and Community Development, Library
Erica Mark	Recreation Services and Facilities Manager Parks & Recreation
Jennifer Miller	Manager of Public Engagement
Katie Stobbart	Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

*Denotes virtual attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor McEvoy opened the meeting at 5:37 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Item 4.3 – Recommendation on Transportation and Accessibility;
- Item 4.4 – Draft Principles; and
- Item 5.1 – BC Disability Caucus Post added by Anne Bélanger, Committee Member

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Brief Overview of the Community Advisory Assembly

Jennifer Miller, Manager of Public Engagement, provided a brief overview of the new Community Advisory Assembly noting the following:

- The application period is now open with an online application form and a paper form soon to be available;
- The Assembly will be a pilot project for one year;
- The Assembly will meet monthly except in the summer months;
- There will be a focus on dialogue and participation with a consensus basis for decision-making;
- The aim is to have a group that will reflect the diversity of New West; and
- Supports are offered to participants including child or elder care, reimbursement of travel expenses, and a stipend for low-income individuals.

In response to questions from Committee members, Ms. Miller provided the following comments:

- The Assembly is anticipated to start meeting in early December or January;
- The City is actively starting the outreach process including reaching out to non-profits, the high school, and other direct outreach to encourage more engagement from diverse individuals;
- The meetings will be held in the evening and possibly on the weekend;
- People can sit on a committee or on the assembly but not both;
- The Citizen's Assembly model has been widely used, but this particular model, which includes focusing on more than one topic, is new;
- If there are vacancies in particular areas or demographics, staff will continue to do outreach following the deadline rather than fill seats with people who do not match the desired demographics; and
- Staff are working to share information in a variety of ways and are open to suggestion for other ways to reach out.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- The timeline for application for the assembly is not compatible with the timeline for application for the Accessibility Advisory Committee; and
- Being ineligible for the Assembly if one is sitting on the Accessibility Advisory Committee may be problematic if staff want to ensure representation of disabled individuals on the Assembly.

4.2 Draft Accessibility Plan

Karen Basran, Human Resources Business Partner, reviewed the draft Accessibility Plan and advised that:

- The plan is in its draft stages;
- Every three years the idea is to come up with a new plan to improve upon what the City is doing; and
- The plan will start with four of the eight focus areas.

In response to questions from Committee members, Ms. Basran advised that the desire in this process is less for consistency across municipalities and more for different municipalities trying different things and comparing notes to develop and improve.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Committee members expressed concern with the fact that there will not be a consistent plan coming from the Province and that each municipality would be conducting their own distinct plan;
- Something missing from this plan and the website is the “truth” piece; used the good work the City is doing on Truth and Reconciliation as an example: there needs to be inclusion of the truth that people with disabilities have experienced systemic barriers and abuse. The plan needs to mention the people and the historic challenges that they have faced.

Committee members provided comments on each of the following aspects of the Plan:

Focus Areas

- The list needs to be in alphabetical order so as not to infer priorities, including a note that it is not in any particular order.

Built Environment

- Sustainable modes of transportation do not include accessible modes of transportation, for example people who need their cars because of their disability, and mobility devices;
- Provisions for accessible parking is not broad enough, and needs to include residential accessible parking for example;
- In the last line of the first paragraph of Wheelability Assessment Project, use “people who use mobility aids” not “reliant on”.

Procedural Note: At 6:48 p.m., Iris Cheng left the meeting.

Service Delivery

- Need to note how disability and accessibility are included in the Official Community Plan in the description;

- There needs to be better knowledge and communication about what is available in the City, for example the financial assistance available for programs;
- The Master Transportation Plan needs to include accessibility and support the idea that some people cannot get out of their cars;
- Under Financial Assistance, should say “New Westminster low-income residents” or “residents whose household income is below \$50,000” and include more clarity about eligibility details;
- Under Accessibility Features, the first sentence is untrue: there are parts of a few civic facilities and public spaces that are not accessible—it could say “many of our public city spaces... are accessible”;
- In the same section, instead of “accommodate wheelchairs”, “accommodate people who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids”; and
- Support the inclusion of details around the City’s audit of facilities and the replacement of aging infrastructure.

Information and Communications

- One thing to add to the list of ways to reach people is through their electric bill, which is more accessible than finding information online.

Employment

- One of the barriers for people with disabilities can be employment itself, so they may not have the same resumes as everyone else (for instance, having shorter-term or part-time employment experiences instead of a long-term full-time position)— it is not just a matter of education vs. experience but types of experiences;
- Discussed the alternate strategies for enhancing the recruitment process, in particular providing questions before the interview;
- In the “Adopting alternate strategies” section, should say that the strategies “may include” the list, not “such as”;
- Under Establishing Community Relationships, would like to see that the City, for these types of programs, will give preferential treatment to the most vulnerable in our community; and,

- In the section on Taleo, it needs to note that it is specific to the City of New Westminster and does not interface with other software or sites.

Moving Forward

- Consider adding the word creativity into this part of the plan—this work also requires applying creativity.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- It would be more concrete and accountable to explicitly say we are going to develop a workplan.

Item 4.3 Recommendation on Transportation and Accessibility

Councillor McEvoy noted that a subgroup of the committee met informally with Mike Anderson, Manager of Transportation, to discuss transportation and generate ideas for a more systemic approach to changes regarding transportation and accessibility.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the committee recommends that the City review all transportation plans and actions, which includes existing and future mobility lanes, to ensure accessibility in all plans and projects related to transportation in a changing environment now and in the future. Such review shall consider the need for wheeled, pedestrian, bus and transit, and parking for people with disabilities, to provide easy access to destinations.

Carried.

All members present voted in in favour of the motion.

Item 4.4 Draft Principles

Staff would like feedback on the principles that were sent via email. Committee members requested that any requests for feedback come during committee time and not in committee members' spare time.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

5.1 **BC Disability Caucus Post**

Anne Belanger, Committee Member, made the committee aware of a post by BC Disability Caucus regarding the lack of the word “disability” on the City’s accessibility website. Staff clarified that the word “disability” was used on the website, and acknowledged that there are differing feelings in the community about which words to use.

6. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 8:09 p.m.

7. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

October 25
November 22

Certified correct,

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk



Accessibility Advisory Committee

MINUTES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

Open to public attendance in Committee Room G

Lower Level, City Hall

Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	Chair
Karen Basran	Human Resources Business Partner
Taryn Bruckshaw	Committee Member
Iris Cheng*	Committee Member
Shannon Dolton*	Committee Member
Hazel Fitzpatrick*	Committee Member
Nancy Kato	Committee Member
Vic Leach	Committee Member
Julia Schoennagel	Committee Member

REGRETS:

Anne Bélanger	Committee Member
Karla Olson	Committee Member

GUESTS:

Drew Ferrari	TransLink
Adam Lougheed	TransLink

STAFF PRESENT:

Mike Anderson	Manager of Transportation, Engineering
Hailey Finnigan	Communications Coordinator, Office of the CAO
Chris Koth	Manager of Programs and Community Development, Library
Erica Mark	Recreation Services and Facilities Manager, Parks and Recreation
Anur Mehdic	Social Planner, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Councillor McEvoy opened the meeting at 5:35 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS**

A round of introductions took place.

3. **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

New Business Item 6.2 – Parking by Julia Schoennagel, Committee Member.

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

4.1 **August 23, 2023**

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the August 23, 2023 Accessibility Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5. **REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

5.1 **TransLink: Burrard Peninsula Area Transportation Plan**

Drew Ferrari and Adam Lougheed of TransLink, shared a PowerPoint Presentation regarding the Burrard Peninsula Area Transportation Plan (the “Plan”).

In response to questions from the Committee, Messrs. Ferrari and Lougheed provided the following comments:

- Approximately 2,800 surveys have been completed so far and there are hardcopies available for those that are unable to complete it online;
- There is no single definition of affordability and the fare structure is outside the scope of the Plan and more of a conversation to have with senior levels of government;

- It is recognized that affordability is an important aspect of accessibility;
- Currently, free transit is offered to youth 12 and under and increasing the age to 18 and under is being considered;
- TransLink faces the same affordability issues that other service providers face such as the cost of fuel and road infrastructure;
- Revenues from gas taxes will be going down with more people using electric vehicles;
- A focus area of the analysis will look at areas where affordability is an issue;
- Consideration will be given to those that use a greater proportion of their income on transportation and the areas in which they reside so that consideration can be given to providing better services in those areas;
- The survey will identify top priorities which will be put into investment plans and funding requests;
- While HandyDART is regional and not a direct part of this Plan, feedback received regarding the service will be shared with the Access Planning Team;
- Accessible washrooms is something that TransLink has been discussing for a long time and there are at least two studies currently underway to address this; however, the challenge is finding someone to operate and maintain each washroom as they are in the public realm. Previously agreements have been struck with retail outlets to provide this service but that is not possible at every place;
- Station planning includes space for washrooms which are usually pre-plumbed;
- Previous area transportation plans would have only invested in the busiest bus stops; however, with all the new policies and tools available for feedback, investments can be prioritized according to where people who use transit live;
- Is it anticipated that washroom accessibility will be a top interest expressed in this survey;
- Advertising for the survey has been shared at all SkyTrain stations, through social media, in the TransLink newsletter which has 175,000 subscribers, as well as other channels of outreach;
- Social media is used as a way to get information to younger people;

- A roundtable was held with stakeholders including those in the trucking industry, HUB Cycling, and essentially anyone who uses roads;
- Transport 2025, the region's 30-year transportation strategy, was recently adopted and contains a lot of content related to safety, including late night bus service, especially in areas where there are not a lot of other transportation options and where riders can request to disembark from a bus in places along their route other than at a bus stop;
- Safety measures on transit includes people being able to text 87.77.77 to contact Transit Police if they have concerns about something happening on the bus they are riding, or by pressing one of the yellow strips located in each SkyTrain car which will result in security meeting them at the next bus or SkyTrain stop;
- Other safety measures being taken include the hiring of approximately 20 additional Community Safety Officers;
- The survey includes a map function that allows participants to identify intersections or areas of the bike network where they do not feel safe;
- TransLink has very robust data sources, including collision data from the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, which are used by the research and analytics team;
- More analysis is being done with respect to equity than has been done with previous Plans;
- Bus shelters are the purview of each municipality; however, TransLink works with municipalities with respect to shelters, some of which are funded through advertising agreements;
- TransLink has some understanding of areas that are unsafe for pedestrians and, if a lot of people indicate that crossing a major road is not safe, that would help prioritize change in that area;
- Wi-Fi is being rolled out throughout the system and is currently available on the new rapid buses, the double-decker buses, and most of the SkyTrain route;
- Stations names are typically based on the geographical location of the station, rather than a person.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Calling it the Burrard Peninsula Area Transportation plan may be confusing for some and make them less inclined to complete the survey;
- Affordability is an issue, especially for seniors and those with disabilities who may be on a fixed income;
- Washroom accessibility is a huge consideration for some people who wish to use transit;
- A higher density of service should be provided in hilly areas of New Westminister as many find it difficult to navigate the hills, particularly those with disabilities;
- Work that the city is doing with respect to the 22nd Street Station re-visioning such as safety and washroom accessibility may align with TransLink priorities and should be considered;
- Maintenance must be an ongoing priority and include repainting of the yellow lines so that they remain visible and keeping elevators and escalators in working order;
- Ensure that riders on both the SkyTrain and buses can see which stop is upcoming regardless of where they are sitting, including those sitting in the rear section of articulator buses;
- The audible announcements on the SkyTrain must be more clear;
- Bus stops must be better managed and those that are located outside a medical building, hospital, or the temple located on Wood Street and used by a lot of elderly or disabled people should have seats and shelter from the weather. There is a need for system leadership and a set of standards in this area;
- Washrooms are a huge issue, including at the 22nd Street Station and the SeaBus Terminal where elderly people often have to sit at a major stop without washroom facilities;
- In order to maintain transportation during snow events, snow tires should be put on the major route buses that people rely on as this can really affect those with mobility issues in particular;
- While most drivers seem naturally attuned to when a passenger is trying to sit down on their bus, all drivers must be trained to ensure that those with mobility issues are sitting prior to starting and stopping the bus;

- Most information is still only provided in English; however, statistics are available that keep track of the languages spoken in any given area and this should information should be utilized by TransLink;
- Crosswalk standards, including walking times, need to be the same across all municipalities and allow people of all abilities to cross the street safely when going to or coming off of a bus;
- Stations and stops with similar names can be confusing; and,
- The City's previous accessibility committee, the Access Ability Advisory Committee, addressed the lack of washrooms at the SeaBus Terminal and this issue has still not been resolved. The current washroom is too far away, especially for those with mobility issues

Procedural note: The Committee took a break from 6:55 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Recruitment

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, reminded Committee members that recruitment for City Advisory Committees ends on October 31, 2023 and encourage members whose terms are expiring to apply for any committee that they may be interested in sitting on.

6.2 Parking

Julia Schoennagel, Committee Member, voiced concern regarding the accessible parking on Tenth Street, next to Columbia Square, noting that the parking is now limited to one hour which is not a long enough time for someone who may have an appointment in the area and experience difficulty exiting and entering their vehicles. She advised that a time limit of at least two hours would be much more user friendly.

In addition, Ms. Schoennagel advised that, while there are not enough accessible parking spaces in the City in general, there is only one accessible parking spot in front of City Hall, near the entrance to the City's accessible meeting rooms.

Ms. Schoennagel requested that the Committee revisit accessible parking at some point in the future.

In response, Councillor McEvoy advised that he would follow up with Mike Anderson, Manager of Transportation, regarding the issues brought forward by Ms. Schoennagel.

Discussion ensued about See Click Fix, a city app that allows people to report and track non-emergency maintenance issues. Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk will send the link to See Click Fix to Committee members in the meeting follow up email.

Councillor McEvoy shared that a discussion has taken place regarding accessibility and the City's capital budget and noted that more discussions would take place in 2024.

7. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 7:12 p.m.

8. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

November 22, 2023

Certified correct,

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk