

**Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting
Agenda**

Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 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>	
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4.2 October 25, 2023	10
4.3 November 22, 2023 (Notes)	17
5. <u>REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS</u>	
Staff and guest reports and presentations for information, discussion, and/or action	
5.1 Draft Accessibility Plan	21
a. Presentation (On Table)	
<i>Karin Pasqua, Universal Design & Accessibility</i>	
6. <u>NEW BUSINESS</u>	
Items added to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.	

7. **END OF MEETING**

8. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Remaining scheduled meetings for 2024, which take place at 5:30 PM unless otherwise noted:

- March 27
- May 22
- July 24
- September 25
- November 27



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 accessibly 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



Accessibility Advisory Committee

NOTES

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

PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	Chair
Karen Basran	Human Resources Business Partner
Shannon Dolton*	Committee Member
Hazel Fitzpatrick*	Committee Member
Karla Olson	Committee Member
Julia Schoennagel	Committee Member

REGRETS:

Anne Bélanger	Committee Member
Taryn Bruckshaw	Committee Member
Iris Cheng	Committee Member
Nancy Kato	Committee Member
Vic Leach	Committee Member

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
Anur Mehdic	Social Planner, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Although quorum was not achieved, Councillor McEvoy opened the meeting at 5:36 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered 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

None.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 September 27, 2023

As quorum was not achieved, the minutes were not adopted.

4.2 October 25, 2023

As quorum was not achieved, the minutes were not adopted.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

None.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Local Community Accessibility Grant Application

Hailey Finnigan, Communications Coordinator, advised committee members of the Local Community Accessibility Grant opportunity and noted that:

- The grants are available to all local governments;
- The New Westminster Police Department (NWPD) is hoping to apply for two grants for:
 - Funding to cover the cost of a feasibility study for the NWDP to replace the lift in the Police Station's lobby that was installed in 1984. A contractor and engineer will look into the lift having a larger footprint in order to fit both a mobility device and an aide inside the lift;
 - Funding to cover the cost of a new accessibility podium, as the current one is damaged and with no height accessibility; and
- It is requested that the Committee write a letter in support of the applications.

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

- While there are two entrances to the Police Station, the one near the lift is on Columbia Street and that will be the one that is assessed;
- The grant money is coming from the provincial government;
- Other city departments may also submit grant applications requesting to receive up to \$25k in funding;
- The lift will be improved and a new accessibility podium will be purchased regardless of the outcome of the grant applications;
- A third grant request for a feasibility study to improve the Sixth Street entrance may be possible;
- Those who find the stairs at the Sixth Street entrance difficult to use are encouraged to use the lift instead;
- An intercom is currently located just outside of the lift, allowing for after-hour communication; however, improving that communication tool will be looked at during the feasibility study;
- Various accessibility podium vendors have been researched and the cost of a podium runs from \$8k to \$14k, with \$9k being the average price for a fully accessible podium; and
- If a grant is secured for the cost of a new podium, it will save asking Council to fund it out of the City's budget;

Hazel Fitzpatrick, Committee Member and New Westminster Police Department volunteer, shared their experience using the current accessibility podium at the Police Department noting that they currently need to be lowered in order to use the podium and that accessibility equipment is expensive.

Discussion ensued and committee members provided the following comments:

- If possible, other alternatives should be explored as the cost of accessibility podiums seems excessive; however, they may become more cost effective if more facilities purchased them; and
- Society is heading toward universal accessibility and once that becomes commonplace the prices of things will drop.

All members of the Committee present agreed that a letter be issued from the Committee in support of the grant applications as outline by Ms. Finnigan.

7. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 6:00 p.m.

8. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

This is the last scheduled meeting of the committee year.

Certified correct,

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

DRAFT

Accessibility Plan 2023



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Introduction

Background

Focus Areas

Moving Forward

Monitoring & Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

New Westminster is a diverse city, rich with people from a wide range of lived and living experiences. This diversity is a strength, and the City of New Westminster is committed to fostering an equitable, inclusive and welcoming community that is accessible to all community members.

This means recognizing and celebrating difference, valuing the contributions made by all staff and community members, and identifying and removing attitudinal, systemic, physical, sensory, information/communication, and technology barriers. We recognize that individuals have diverse identities and lived realities that intersect and affect how they experience barriers and accessibility.

The City of New Westminster is committed to providing people of all abilities opportunities to participate in their community through work, play, and other daily activities.

BACKGROUND

New Westminster recognizes that accessibility means removing barriers and increasing inclusion and independence for everyone. As a City we are continually developing and enhancing a variety of plans, standards, programs and initiatives through community engagement, coordinated and collaborative research, and community-based assessments. One of our objectives is to ensure our practices, services, and communication are inclusive and accessible for everyone in our community.

To further enhance this process the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be reviewing current practices, standards, and services to assist with continuous learning and improvement through recommendations, new standards, and inclusivity measures to support people with a variety of seen and unseen disabilities in order to enhance and develop equitable opportunities to access, participate and contribute.

Input for the Introduction/Background:

- ***Acknowledging historic challenges, systemic barriers, unconscious bias and the people involved***

- ***“the truth is missing” – recognizing that people with disabilities have been ignored and have faced abuse, discrimination, disrespectful behaviour, isolation,***

FOCUS AREAS

In this inaugural Accessibility Plan the City of New Westminster will be enhancing the accessibility standards within the following key focus areas:

- Built Environment
- Employment
- Information and Communications
- Service Delivery

The Accessibility Plan and associated approaches and standards will be based on core accessibility principles including: inclusion, adaptability, collaboration, diversity, self-determination, and universal design. At the same time, this process will be holistic and collaborative with support from all work areas across the City, including Library, Police and Fire.

The Accessibility Plan strategically aligns with the Council Strategic Priorities Plan (2023-2026), which includes five areas of focus, with Community Building and Connection being a central focal point. The other focus areas include Asset Management and Infrastructure, Homes and Housing Options, People-Centered Economy, and Safe Movement of People.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The City of New Westminster actively works with various community partners, design consultants, contractors, external agencies and other partners to improve, update and create infrastructure that addresses accessibility for our communities.

The City has a variety of initiatives that focus on addressing safe and accessible movement throughout our neighbourhoods, including:

Master Transportation Plan & Neighbourhood Plans

The Master Transportation Plan & Neighbourhood Plans are overarching long-term plans for transportation in New Westminster that prioritize sustainable modes of transportation (walking/wheeling, cycling, transit) and call for improved sidewalk accessibility and integrating principles of Universal Design.

Active Transportation Network Plan

The Active Transportation Network Plan is a city-wide plan that focuses on 26 active transportation routes across New Westminster that are designed for people of all ages and abilities. The plan emphasizes cycling but acknowledges that users of mobility aids will also access this infrastructure.

Signalized Intersections Policy

This policy outlines best practices for consistency in the design and installation of traffic signals and crosswalks that are focused on pedestrian convenience, comfort, and accessibility with a central emphasis on addressing accessibility barriers for people using our streets.

Improvements and Enhancements to Bylaws

The *Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw* was recently updated to outline how private developers can ensure that new public infrastructure is accessible. It includes details regarding construction materials, measurements and other factors that need to be considered. As well, the updated *Zoning Bylaw* includes provisions for off-street accessible parking in new developments.

Wheelability Assessment Project

In March 2019, the City received a Built Environment and Active Transportation Grant of \$25,000 to implement the Wheelability Assessment Project to improve mobility and transportation options for people who use mobility aids.

In addition, the City has installed curb letdowns, countdown timers and accessible pushbuttons, and improved pedestrian crossings across New Westminster to enhance safety and accessibility. There are also a variety of accessible design examples within our City, such as Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs) at Agnes Greenway, wheelchair accessible picnic tables at Victoria Hill Play Space and Moody Park,

improved accessible parking at Moody Park Arena, and improved pathways for wheeled apparatus at Riverside Park.

EMPLOYMENT

The City of New Westminster supports each work area with respect to recruitment and selection, learning and development, return to work initiatives, leadership and professional growth. This also includes developing and maintaining various processes, procedures and policies for a safe, respectful and inclusive work environment.

Current Services, Projects and Initiatives:

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism (DEIAR) Framework

Through a collaboration with LevelUp Planning and Consulting, we conducted city-wide research through various consultation strategies to develop and implement a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (DEIAR) Framework for the City, which also included the Police and Library Boards.

The framework includes next step recommendations, toolkits, and resources to ensure that there are opportunities to review current practices, obtain different perspectives and incorporate equitable options to enhance inclusivity and diversity through learning and training.

Recruitment Strategies

Through the development of the DEIAR framework, the Human Resources Department has been working in conjunction with hiring managers to review our current recruitment strategies, which has included adopting the following:

- Updating our postings to include a diversity statement and land acknowledgement
- Reviewing postings for inclusive language, such as highlighting opportunities for experience in place of education, and ensuring tasks/duties are not portrayed as gender specific
- Adopting alternate strategies to enhance the recruitment process that may include:
 - Pre-screening through telephone calls

- Offering virtual interviews
- Providing interview questions before the interview
- Streamlining the recruitment process with combined interviews and testing
- Providing feedback to applicants to encourage growth and development opportunities

New Talent Management System (Taleo)

A new Talent Management System (Taleo) has been implemented to assist with streamlining the application process for the City of New Westminster. Through the new system candidates can explore job postings, set-up their profile, and establish alerts for future opportunities.

Establishing Community Relationships

Working with different post-secondary institutions to explore co-op learning opportunities, as well as establish partnerships. With more in-person events staff has started attending local job fairs as well as conducting outreach to form relationships with diverse organizations including local agencies, post secondary institutions, and return to work program providers.

Input for the Employment:

- **Ways to obtain stats regarding diversity and accessibility and how to measure**
- **Looking at employment program providers to attract diverse candidates through various recruitment, hiring and engagement strategies**
- **Exploring options for more inclusive applications that address accessibility barriers, but being mindful that this isn't tailored for traditional**
- **Are we able to retain and support the ongoing development of these candidates – which may have been under recognized in the past?**

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The City of New Westminster works with internal and external partners to ensure a variety of communication methods are utilized to promote city programs, plans, projects, services, and events.

A key component of information and communications includes public engagement, which provides community members an opportunity to provide their voice on the projects and initiatives that impact their lives. The City's engagement work is guided by the Public Engagement Policy and Public Engagement Strategy.

To ensure equitable access to information we use the following ways to communicate with the public:

- Citypage Online newsletter, which is emailed directly to subscribers
- City of New Westminster social media channels (YouTube, Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, etc.)
- Digital billboards throughout the city
- Posters in City-owned facilities
- City of New Westminster /New Westminster Police Department/New Westminster Public Library websites
- City Calendar of Events
- Press releases
- Reports and brochures
- Digital monitors inside City-owned facilities
- Advertising in local news publications (online)
- Clarion Publication

We actively seek opportunities to improve accessibility by employing the following options wherever possible:

- Captions in videos
- Using photos that address diversity and inclusiveness
- Alt Text that enables assistive technology to describe an image
- Plain language
- Websites designed and coded so people with disabilities can use them
- Simplifying layout and design

Be Heard New West

Be Heard is the City's online community engagement platform that provides a consistent, user-friendly online space where New West residents and community partners can learn about City projects, share their feedback and engage in dialogue with each other.

Community members can register on the site and receive updates when new projects are posted and projects are updated. The goal is to build an active online community and have residents and business operators coming to the online site regularly to engage with the City.

Community Action Network

In 2019 the City of New Westminster partnered with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition on a unique project called the Community Action Network (CAN), through which people with lived and living experience are meaningfully engaged in planning and policy development. This enduring partnership is intended to ensure:

- that planning and policy development processes are inclusive of all community members, including those with lived experiencing in poverty and homelessness;
- that barriers to meaningful engagement are identified and addressed;
- that people with lived and living experience are acknowledged as subject matter experts and compensated accordingly; and,
- that plans and policies are more responsive to the diversity of community needs.

In 2023, the City was awarded the Gold Award for Excellence in Planning Practice – City & Urban Areas from the Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC) for its Community Action Network (CAN).

SERVICE DELIVERY

The City of New Westminster has been working on providing increased accessibility within our facilities and through services delivered. This has included updating accessibility policies, completing an accessibility audit and compiling a list of recommendations. Some of our current services, projects and initiatives include:

New Westminster's Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan provides a vision, goals, and policies for the City of New Westminster to the year 2041, which includes specific actions, development permit guidelines, and land use designations. This Plan is implemented by the City in various ways, including through policy initiatives, public programs, civic projects, and bylaws.

Financial Assistance

New Westminster residents may receive a 50% discount on eligible programs and approved household members are granted \$1000 non-transferable credits that are used within a certain timeframe.

Access Tickets

The Access Tickets initiative includes providing bulk sales to pre-approved qualifying Social Service agencies that offer mental health residential or transitional services in New Westminster. We have established partnerships with these agencies and they in turn dispense the Access Tickets that provide a 50% discount on admission fees to their clients.

Drop-In Programs

When a support person is needed to assist one of our customers to partake in admission-based programs, we provide free admission to the accompanying support person.

Try It Programs

Each season we offer new opportunities at our \$2.00 rate. The Try It program offerings change seasonally and the reduced fee applies to everyone to experience new programs and build community connections.

New Westminster Age and Ability Friendly Community Strategy

The City of New Westminster was officially recognized as an Age-Friendly British Columbia (AFBC) community in 2018. Ahead of its successful application to become an AFBC community, the City developed an Age-Friendly Community Strategy in April 2017. This strategy proactively addresses present and future needs associated with an aging population and supports a vision of the City as a welcoming, inclusive and accessible community in which older adults and seniors can continue to lead fulfilling, involved and meaningful lives.

New Westminster Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan

A Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan was developed in conjunction with the Alzheimer's Society February 2016, which included creating a framework through a project working group, survey, and literature review.

New Westminster Public Library

The City Library provides access to collections, services and programs free of charge to residents of New Westminster through both our Main and Queensborough branches. In addition to the library operates a [Home Library Service](#) for those experiencing challenges using print materials, as well as other challenges that make it difficult to visit the library in person. Future plans include the provision of adaptive equipment that will expand access to public technology, introducing hybrid programming that will allow residents the choice to attend programs in person or virtually, as well as updates to the library website that will increase accessibility options where possible. In addition, the library's team of community librarians are working directly outside the walls of the library in the community to meet individuals 'where they are'. Their goal in this work is to identify and address both visible and invisible barriers to library services to help promote an inclusive and universal service design approach for library programs and spaces.

Everybody Active

The City received funding from the BC Recreation and Parks Association under the Everybody Active Initiative and a report with consultation findings was created in November 2009.

Accessibility Features

Each of our public city spaces including recreation centres, parks and arenas are accessible. All Recreation Centres offer accessible parking, accessible entrances and washrooms. Also, park accessibility refers to corresponding trails, parking, and washrooms that can accommodate wheelchair and other mobility aid users.

The təməsewtx^w Aquatic and Community Centre

The təməsewtx^w Aquatic and Community Centre is a multi-year project that is scheduled to open in 2024, and we are working with the Rick Hansen Foundation to ensure it meets their accessibility certification process.

Input for the Service Delivery:

- ***For the Accessibility Features section – shouldn't include a broad claim; there should be an acknowledgement that we are faced with aging infrastructure,***

which means each building may be accessible but not necessarily every aspect of the building or the surrounding area (such as stairs, parking, access to entrances

- *Could also be challenging for those with disabilities to get to city spaces*

MOVING FORWARD

Part of the work going forward includes developing definitions and principles that reflect what accessibility means for the City of New Westminster and the greater community. This includes understanding and addressing seen and unseen barriers, conscious and unconscious biases, and systemic limitations, through conversations, research, audits, partnerships, and community engagement.

This will include enhancing our physical environment as well as the various services and programs provided throughout the City to increase active opportunities to enhance inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.

The overall intent is to explore and apply various accessibility tools, guidelines and standards, informed by meaningful engagement, to enhance our built environment, service delivery, information and communications, and employment in order to prioritize accessibility and inclusion.

Input for Moving Forward:

- Add that it's about "creativity" being "forward thinking"
- What are the accessibility barriers that we are working on to address
- Details/information to assist with developing a work plan
- Include our commitment to work with those with lived/living experience to help us identify and address seen and unseen barriers and biases
- Principles and Values document by Councillor McEvoy
- Developing a process for addressing feedback that will be received through the accessibility email
- Training for staff; as well as developing tools that both staff and managers can use when reviewing, developing or creating projects, changes/updates, policies/procedures etc.

- Tools/guides for enhancing avenues for obtaining feedback and input from the community
- Continuing to learn about and incorporate emerging best practices in the design of infrastructure, information, and services
- Methods/Steps for developing a set of terms and principles

MONITORING & EVALUATION

The accessibility actions will be monitored with annual reports, and an evaluation matrix will be developed to measure the impact of the Accessibility Plan. The results of the evaluation and input from different sources will support the development of the next Accessibility Plan.

Principles and Values:

1. Universal Accessibility/Universal Design
2. POUR = Perceivable, operable, understandable, and Robust
3. Visible and Invisible Disabilities
4. Standards of Accessibility
 - a. Information and Communication Standards
 - b. Employment Standards
 - c. Transportation Standards
 - d. Design of Public Spaces Standards
 - e. Customer Service Standards
5. Information, Goals, Measurability
6. Inclusion
7. “Nothing for Us, Without Us”
8. Before and after