



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

Accessibility Advisory Committee

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 25, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
Open to public attendance in Committee Room G
Lower Level, City Hall
Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT:

Julia Drew	Alternate Chair
Karen Basran	Human Resources Business Partner
Anne Bélanger*	Committee Member
Vic Leach	Committee Member
Katie Marshall	Committee Member
Karla Olson	Committee Member
Julia Schoennagel	Committee Member

REGRETS:

Councillor Tasha Henderson	
Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	
Hazel Fitzpatrick	Committee Member
Nancy Kato	Committee Member
Asifa Lalji	Committee Member
Colleen Vogler	Committee Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Erica Mark	Manager, Recreation Services and Facilities
Hailey Finnigan	Communications Coordinator, Office of the CAO
Anur Mehdic	Social Planner 2
Carilyn Cook	Legislative Services Assistant/Committee Clerk, Legislative Services
Jasmine Claypool*	Recorder, Raincoast Ventures Ltd.

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Julie Drew, Alternate Chair, opened the meeting at 5:40 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. She acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. She recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, Legislative Services, read a message of regret from Councillor Henderson.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

None.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA – to add to new business

The following items were added to the agenda by Committee Members:

- Item 6.1 – Access and Inclusion Discussion; and
- Item 6.2 – E-bike discussion

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the September 25, 2024, agenda of the Accessibility Advisory Committee be adopted as amended.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

None.

5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Queen’s Park Concession Kiosk Accessibility Wording

Erica Mark, Manager of Recreation Services and Facilities, advised of a sign displayed at the Queen’s Park Concession Kiosk that read “Accessibility Challenges – Order Here.” It was noted that the sign was intended to be helpful by directing customers to the lower counter with better accessibility for scooters/wheelchairs.

During ensuing discussion, comments were offered regarding banks that use images, a preference for a combination of an image and text, and a suggestion for staff training to identify customers who would be better served at the lower

counter.

It was decided that both the universal symbol and text be used to identify the lower counter at the Queen's Park Concession Kiosk for priority access.

5.2 Hearing Loop Technology

Erica Mark, Manager of Recreation Services and Facilities, advised of the Hearing Loop Technology currently being piloted at the tēmәsewtx^w Aquatic and Community Centre, noting an interest in expanding the technology into other city locations.

Discussion ensued, during which questions were raised regarding:

- Whether T-coil is standard equipment on a hearing aid; and
- Whether the technology would work for people with cochlear implants.

A suggestion was made to explore staff training opportunities on recognizing hearing challenges, with potential resources including hearing clinics, Fraser Health Authority, and Century House. Anne Bélanger, Committee Member, off to explore options and email the Committee Clerk on the findings.

In response to questions posed during discussion, it was noted that further information was needed.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Access and Inclusion – Wording Discussion

Karla Olson, Committee Member, invited discussion regarding the wording of the Access and Inclusion statement in the Fall 2024 Active Living Guide (ALG) and suggested a revision, highlighting that “benefits” implies an advantage. The importance of recognizing human rights was also mentioned.

Discussion ensued, and Committee members provided the following comments:

- The “Accessible New West” web page uses the word “benefit” and should be updated to match language in a revised Access and Inclusion statement; and
- Accessibility is a human rights issue and benefits everyone.

Ms. Olson highlighted the communicative purpose of raising awareness about human rights issues and noted concern with the term “universal access” as it was originally linked to universal access to information.

During ensuing discussion, it was noted that the language did not clearly reference the Parks and Recreation Access and Inclusion Committee, and it was acknowledged that the wording should be revised for clarity.

A Committee member commented on the photo featured above the Access and Inclusion statement in the Fall 2024 ALG and noted that the children represent diversity, but there is a lack of disability representation.

In response to a question about how accessibility challenges are linked to the income threshold for financial assistance for registered recreation programs, Erica Mark noted that the Financial Assistance Program and eligibility criteria was being reviewed.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments with respect to additional wording concerns:

- Under the “Support Person” heading: “... despite our best efforts, we cannot accommodate all needs or requests due to limitations on equipment, training or funding”; and
- Access & Inclusion: “...is in the final stages of completing a draft Accessibility Plan.”

It was noted that there are eight categories or key focus areas that have been developed to support Provincial Accessibility Plans, and that certain categories are being addressed at a time by the Province, with continual updates bi-annually.

A Committee member suggested that “...is in the final stages of completing a draft Accessibility Plan” be updated to indicate that the City “...is in the final stages of *developing* a draft Accessibility Plan”.

Additional discussion ensued regarding the terms “universal design” and “barrier-free design”, noting that when people with disabilities are prioritized, it also benefits people with strollers and others.

Ms. Olson volunteered to gather Committee members’ feedback and forward recommended wording to Erica Mark by October 10, 2024, so that the opening paragraph under “Access & Inclusion” in the Fall 2024 ALG could be revised.

Additional discussion regarding the Financial Assistance Program for recreation programs ensued, during which it was suggested that income confirmation from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction be acceptable and that a 50% program contribution is a barrier for some people.

A discussion about whether to highlight people with disabilities ensued, highlighting potential preferred outcomes of raising awareness but noting that it is not always safe or appropriate for everyone. An example was shared of a city employee misunderstanding “universal access” and the need to shift to “universal design”.

6.2 E-bike Discussion

Committee members held a discussion regarding the loss of parking spots due to the conversion of spaces for e-bikes, which are not suitable transportation options for people with disabilities who rely on cars. It was noted that many of the converted spaces were more accessible parking spots.

In addition to safety concerns, including a high number of injuries and lack of helmet use, it was highlighted that there are currently no licensing requirements for e-bikes or e-scooters. E-bikes fall under provincial jurisdiction but are not covered under the *Motor Vehicle Act*.

In response to a question about how the City of New Westminster determines the number and location of accessible parking spaces, Committee members were advised of the procedure for members of the public to address Council on open delegation nights, including five minutes to address Council and potential questions from Council or further response from a specific department.

The need for additional information regarding the accessible parking spots policy and decision-making could be added to the next Committee meeting agenda.

Anne Bélanger departed the meeting at 6:57 p.m., and Carilyn Cook, Legislative Services Assistant/Committee Clerk, advised that quorum had been lost.

Discussion ensued related to e-bikes, and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Suggestion to invite the E-bike Roll-Out Lead to a Committee meeting;
- Ability to contact Lime regarding misplaced bikes;
- Ease of access for children with debit/supplementary credit cards;
- Lack of Canadian data related to injuries/deaths linked to e-bikes or e-scooters; and
- Significantly lower traffic injuries/deaths in Norway compared to British Columbia (BC) while both places have similar populations (examples of

significantly higher fines for traffic law infractions in Norway compared to BC).

Anur Mehdic, Social Planner 2, advised of an application for funding related to updating the “age-friendly community strategy” and possible support of the updates being received from the Committee.

7. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 7:15 p.m.

8. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

November 27, 2024.

Certified correct,

Councillor Tasha Henderson

Carilyn Cook, Committee
Clerk/Legislative Services Assistant