



Accessibility Advisory Committee

Minutes

October 23, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
White Rock Community Centre

PRESENT: Danielle Burns, Community Member
Ernie Klassen, Community Member
Ryan Lachance, Community Member
Satish Mistry, Community Member
Louise Taylor, Community Member (arrived at 4:17 p.m.)
Colleen Turnley, Community Member (arrived at 4:09 p.m.)

ABSENT: Mohlin Pillay, Community Member

STAFF: Kari Laing, Director of Human Resources (Chairperson)
Anne Berry, Director of Planning and Development Services
Jim Gordon, Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations
Janessa Auer, Committee Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Director of Human Resources assumed the role of Chairperson and called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Roundtable introductions took place. Members shared their personal perspectives on accessibility and provided insight into what they hope this Committee can accomplish to help the City become an inclusive and accessible community.

C. Turnley arrived at 4:09 p.m.

3. OVERVIEW OF COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chairperson provided an overview of the Committee's roles and responsibilities, highlighting the following points:

- The Committee will be asked to provide input regarding the implementation of accessibility standards in various areas, including policies, service delivery methods, employment, transportation, as well as public/physical spaces.
- It will be important to keep in mind that there may be limitations on what types of improvements the City is able to carry out, depending on budget requirements and staff work plans needing to be adjusted.
- Members were advised that they may receive accessibility-related questions/requests from members of the public now that they sit on this Committee. They were encouraged to inform people about the Accessibility page on the City's website, which also includes a link to the online accessibility feedback form, where they can submit ideas and/or issues they would like to bring forward to the Committee. Alternatively, members are welcome to make note of any feedback shared with them and bring it forward to the Committee for discussion at the next meeting.

L. Taylor arrived at 4:17 p.m.

4. ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

The Chairperson introduced the City's Accessibility Action Plan and emphasized the fact that this is a draft document, which will be continually added to and improved upon with assistance from the Committee. She provided a brief overview of the Plan, highlighting key points as follows:

- Page six (6) of the Plan includes a fairly "bare bones" list of resource links; Committee members were encouraged to share any additional resources they feel would be beneficial to include.
- At this time, the City can receive accessibility feedback/ideas from the public only via email, but staff are open to hearing feedback from members around whether we should also provide other methods for feedback submissions.
- When reviewing the list of action items included in the Identified Barriers section of the Plan, even for items that are project-based and already in progress, Committee members were encouraged to bring forward any

suggestions they may have around improvements and/or accessibility considerations to be included in these projects.

The Chairperson then asked Committee members to share any feedback and/or additional suggestions for the Plan. A roundtable discussion followed, during which time the following was noted:

- An inquiry was raised about whether high-rise development projects are required to meet certain accessibility requirements. Staff advised that the City is currently not authorized to require anything further than what is stipulated in the BC Building Code; however, it was also noted that there may be opportunities for the City to discuss accessibility considerations with developers when going through the rezoning application process.
- Staff also noted that there may be opportunities to explore potential changes to existing policies to allow the City to have more input around accessibility considerations required for future development projects.
- Accessibility concerns regarding pedestrian use of crosswalks were raised. The following issues were noted:
 - Some crosswalks with pedestrian-activated traffic control signals are difficult and dangerous to access for people using wheelchairs and/or mobility devices, as they often must position themselves partly in the roadway and possibly in the line of traffic in order to properly access the buttons.
 - The grades/inclines from the roadway to the sidewalk at some intersections are quite steep and unsafe for people using wheelchairs, causing a risk of tipping over (Thrift Avenue and Winter Street was provided as a specific example of this issue).

ACTION ITEM: Committee member, R. Lachance, to visit various White Rock intersections in need of accessibility improvements with the Director of Engineering and Municipal Operations, to demonstrate specific challenges faced by individuals using wheelchairs.

- Bench colours can be challenging for people with dementia, due to a deficit in colour vision. It was suggested that the City could paint benches a specific colour that is known to be more easily visible and calming for people with dementia. Staff noted it would be important to ensure the City aligns with industry standards if/when bench colours are changed.

ACTION ITEM: Committee member, L. Taylor, to seek further information on this topic from her colleagues at Brella Community Services Society and report back to the Committee at a future meeting.

- It was suggested that painting yellow strips on street curbs can assist with visibility and safety; however, staff noted that yellow markings on street curbs can have a very different meaning for drivers and may lead to confusion around parking restrictions.
- An example of an automatic accessible door opener that triggers when the user waves in front of a sensor from a distance back, rather than having to get closer to the door to physically touch/push the button, was shared.
- Accessibility concerns at the waterfront and beach areas were raised. The following was noted:
 - Railroad crossing areas/ramps are very difficult to navigate for wheelchair users and those with physical mobility challenges.
 - Special ramps that can provide wheelchair access right onto the beach were suggested. Staff noted that the City will soon have three (3) accessible points along West & East Beach with ramps for wheelchair access down to the beach, but that once down to the beach, a beach wheelchair would likely be necessary to successfully maneuver on the sand.
 - Using specially adapted beach wheelchairs can be successful; however, there are other accessibility barriers (financial support, volunteer/staff capacity, etc.) that make it challenging to have them available for members of the public to rent/use and have assistance with.
- The following points were noted regarding sidewalks:
 - A decision made by the City to cut down several trees on sidewalks between Russell Avenue and North Bluff Road received criticism from many residents; however, it can be considered an improvement for those with physical mobility challenges, because it resulted in the sidewalks becoming easier to navigate safely. It was suggested that the Committee could explore further improvements for additional sidewalks throughout the City.
 - A sidewalk that connects to the parking lot behind the businesses near 1531 Johnston Road is not fully wheelchair accessible and has no signage indicating this. A Committee member has witnessed

other wheelchair users start heading down the sidewalk, only to have to turn around when they arrive at the point where the sidewalk becomes a set of stairs and is inaccessible.

- It may be beneficial to concentrate specifically on the Uptown and Waterfront areas, and to determine one “best” route for each, where accessibility resources and implementation can be focused on. This may be a more realistic way to make use of available resources and make a greater impact with improvements if they are focused on two (2) specific routes to start.
- Feedback was shared regarding the Five Corners Gathering Space action item from the Plan, and it was noted that residents with physical mobility challenges who live Uptown would be more likely to attend City events if more are planned for this area, as it is much more accessible for them than the Waterfront.
- The topic of accessibility issues at various bus stops in White Rock was discussed, and staff noted that it would be helpful if specific bus stop locations that require improvements can be identified to them.

ACTION ITEM: Committee member, D. Burns, to collect a list of bus stop locations that need accessibility improvements and share with staff at a future meeting.

- Several concerns were noted about accessing HandyDART services, but it was noted that this is not within the City's jurisdiction. Staff did confirm, however, that there is potential for Council to advocate on the behalf of residents in providing feedback/suggestions to the province around this topic.
- It was noted that accessible parking spots are not always available when needed, perhaps due to the growing number of people who use them. It was suggested that more accessible parking spots should be created, as well as the application of stricter enforcement of appropriate use of these spots. Staff noted that the City follows provincial regulations around parking requirements, which are incorporated into White Rock's zoning bylaw, for private developments. Public parking areas follow a different set of standards set by the Ministry of Transportation. If the Committee would like to advocate for a change to the City's accessible parking requirements for future private developments, this would require proposing an amendment to the zoning bylaw.

- An inquiry was raised regarding more details around what is planned for the Kent Street Activity Centre. Staff noted that there are structural improvements planned, but there is also a needs assessment study that will be conducted by the Recreation and Culture department, the results of which will be shared with Council to inform the direction they choose to take going forward.

5. ROUNDTABLE

None

6. 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Chairperson asked for feedback around using the White Rock Community Centre as the meeting venue, and the members in attendance confirmed that it was a suitable location.

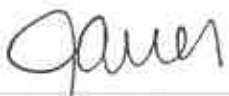
It was noted that staff will send the following proposed 2024 meeting dates to Committee members via email, for their review and approval:

- January 23, 2024;
- April 23, 2024;
- July 23, 2024; and,
- October 29, 2024.

7. CONCLUSION OF THE OCTOBER 23, 2023 ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The meeting was concluded at 5:26 p.m.


Kari Laing, Chairperson


Janessa Auer, Committee Clerk