

Accessibility Working Group Minutes
September 16, 2019
4:00 pm, Cook Street Activity Centre

1. Welcome and roll call

- AWG Members - Linda Bartram, Robin Bayley, Paul Jones, Susan Gallagher, Chris Dobbie, Steve Bertrand (regrets), Chris Marks (absent)
- Council Liaison – Sarah Potts
- Staff – Sarah Webb & Tim Hewett (Transportation), Kelly-Anne Malcomson (admin support)
- Guests – Keith and Mary (ASL interpreters), Christine Paisley & Elizabeth Syring (Action Committee)

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the addition of “Scramble Crosswalk” and “closure of elevator at Bastion Square (Yates) parkade”.
Moved by Linda, seconded by Susan, carried

3. Approval of August 12, 2019 minutes

Moved by Linda, seconded by Chris, carried

4. Consultation on Vancouver Street, Harbour Road and Graham/Jackson bike lane designs

The AWG was supplied with a link to high level drawings and text descriptions prior to the meeting. Robin commented that more detail would have been helpful so less time could be taken explaining details during the meeting. Sarah explained that they are in the concept phase and just moving into the detailed design phase and AWG’s feedback will help inform the design. These 3 projects will incorporate 3 types of bike lanes: shared roadway on quieter streets with traffic calming, one-way protected bike lanes on either side of the street and two-way protected bike lanes on one side of the street. The Vancouver St. corridor will be a combination of shared roadway and one-way protected bike lanes. Proposed accessibility features – improved and new curb letdowns,

tactile directional domes, new shorter pedestrian crossing distances, new and replacement Accessible Pedestrian Signals, on-street accessible parking stalls, accessible public plazas. Sarah also indicated that there are proposed new uncontrolled pedestrian crossings over the bike lane. Linda pointed out that it is this type of crossing that is unacceptable as pedestrians who are blind cannot see or hear cyclists and determine when it is safe to cross. It is this type of crossing that triggered the Human Rights complaint regarding the bike lanes on Pandora and the concerns Linda expressed to Council recently regarding the bike lanes on Wharf. Uncontrolled marked pedestrian crossings, including mid-block crossings, are unsafe for persons with disabilities and seniors.

Sarah commented that there are 6 such uncontrolled crossings being installed on Dallas Rd and the distance and frequency of these crossings would have to be reconsidered if they were to be signalized as no signalized crossings have been budgeted for at present. AWG reiterated that universal design of road crossings including bike lanes means that they are accessible to all pedestrians and that uncontrolled marked pedestrian crossings create barriers for persons with disabilities. Linda reminded staff that a sighted individual presented to Council asking for controlled crossings on Dallas Rd. It will be necessary to find a balance with perhaps uncontrolled crossings between controlled crossings keeping the distances between acceptable. The speed of vehicles may also need to be reduced.

Christine commented that accessible parking spaces need to be big enough to accommodate a person with a disability accessing all sides of their vehicle safely and that letdowns to the sidewalk need to be convenient.

Action: Sarah will speak with David Willows regarding letdown locations.

The bike lane projects will also include the creation of public plazas. Susan and Robin volunteered to participate on a subcommittee to consult on the accessibility details of these plazas. Robin wondered if a “no dog” or “no food” space could be considered. She also gave kudos to the decision to install accessible picnic tables at the West Songhees Plaza. These tables are made of an impermeable material, have

provision for a wheelchair to roll up to the table and the benches are accessible without stepping over the bench or a brace at the end.

Sarah indicated that Victoria is working in tandem with Saanich with regards to installation of tactile domes, some of which will be directional in nature. Robin pointed out that there should be City policy regarding the installation of such tactile warning and way finding. Sarah agreed that the City needs to update its current standards and specifications into a finalized methodology. This would eliminate the need for AWG to be consulted in such depth for every project. It was noted that policies should also be in place for pedestrian crossings. Sarah admitted that the City has fallen short in when it comes to policy.

Sarah reported that all the identified pilot locations where tactile domes were to be installed have been completed. Linda indicated that AWG had not been informed and that the corner of Shakespeare and Hillside was not completed the last time she walked in that area.

Action: Sarah will check on this location and will endeavor to inform the AWG when AWG recommendations have been completed in a timelier manner.

The question of no lip curbs was raised as they continue to be installed with no tactile domes. This is another case where if there was a City policy, AWG would not have to monitor every situation to ensure that barriers were not being created. It was anticipated that the tactile dome “pilot” would establish in which situations a no-lip curb with tactile domes or a 10 ml lip was more appropriate but there was no evaluation of the “pilot”.

There will be scheduled on-site visits to specific locations in the coming months and requested visits can also be arranged.

Action: Sarah to let AWG know about these visits and Linda to let Christine know so Action Committee members can also attend.

AWG members indicated that there had not been enough time to give all input as there was so much to review with 3 projects. Sarah invited AWG members to give further input in writing and indicated that they could also come back for a further consultation.

5. Business Arising

a. Sidewalk patios obscuring sidewalks

Paul showed pictures of examples the worst offender being one just east of Blanshard on the south side of Fort. He also showed pictures of sandwich boards in the downtown core that do not have City stickers. It should not be up to citizens affected by these obstructions to have to report the violations. The City should be more effectively policing the situation, particularly in the downtown core.

Action: Robin will draft a motion which will be circulated for discussion and approval.

Steve was not present to speak to the issue of accessible seating on patios. Christine spoke to the lack of accessible seating in restaurants and feels that the City should find a way to regulate this.

b. Updates

- Accessibility Framework - AWG will have a closed meeting to discuss the Framework on October 7 at 4:15. The plan is to do much of the review work via email and meet to pull it together on the 7th.

Action: Linda will contact Fraser Work indicating that AWG members are available for the joint meeting either on October 16 or the following week after October 21.

- Cyclist education poster - Further wording feedback was shared with Sarah Webb before the AWG meeting officially started.

Action: Sarah to clarify “crosswalk”, add graphic of “zebra crossing” and change “encounter” to “see” and share revised poster text with AWG.

- Pilot APS on Wharf - This was deferred as the staff involved had left the meeting

Action: Linda will contact Sarah Webb regarding this item and ask how this pilot will be conducted and evaluated.

- Moratorium on installation of uncontrolled crosswalks over bike lanes - Councilor Potts will be bringing forward to Council, this motion and the other 2 motions passed at the August meeting. She plans to bring them forward separately and will try to get at least the one pertaining to accessible voting on this week's agenda.

Note: As of 5:20 there was no longer either a Council Liaison or staff member present even though there were still agenda items to discuss and the meeting was to go to 6:00. Robin does not feel this is acceptable and wants AWG to request a staff liaison now that Doug has retired. Linda is choosing to communicate directly with the appropriate staff and finds this is working quite well and does not want to have to go through a liaison. Paul stated that a Councilor should definitely be present for the entire meeting.

- Linda's presentation to Council regarding uncontrolled pedestrian crossings over bike lanes - Despite staff being present during this presentation, they still do not appear to understand the issue. Fraser Work has requested a field trip to witness the barrier. Linda has a recording of her presentation.
- Educational brochures regarding pollinators and allergies - Alex Harned has indicated that she plans to approach the AWG regarding further community garden projects to ensure accessibility considerations are taken into account.

It appears that staff feel they are restricted to public education as the only approach they can take to the issue.

Action: Linda will ask the Council liaisons if this is Council's understanding or whether Council still wishes staff to work with the AWG and UFT to explore options for finding a balance.

- Facility accessibility checklist. The latest version has been sent to Engagement and they have indicated that they have added it to their "tool kit".

6. New Business

- a. Scramble crosswalk – the visual and audible signals last for 4 seconds and then there is a countdown from 25. The visual/audible walk signal should be longer with a shorter countdown.
- b. Elevator shutdown at Bastion Square (Yates St.) parkade. There will be a shuttle for persons who cannot take the stairs, but it will not transport wheelchairs or walkers. It is necessary to be able to use stairs to get to the elevator and there are no designated accessible parking spots above the ground level so those who use accessible parking will not be affected.

7. Next meeting – October 7 at 4:15 at the Cook Street Village Activity Centre. This meeting will be for the 7 official AWG members only.

8. Meeting adjourned at 6:08