

Accessibility Working Group Meeting
October 1, 2018
Cook Street Activity Centre

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Present: Linda Bartram (Chair), Chris Dobbie (arrived at 4:05), Chris Marks, Robin Bayley, Steve Bertrand (arrived at 4:22), Paul Jones (arrived at 4:22) and Susan Gallagher

Interpreters: Keith Brougham, Mary Butterfield

Councillor: Councillor Loveday (arrived at 5:20 pm)

Staff: Brad Dellebuur, Assistant Director – Transportation
Navdeep Sidhu, Assistant Director – Parks, Recreation and Facilities,
Brooke Stark, Manager - Parks Operations
Leigh Campbell, Manager - Parks Planning, Design and Development

2. Approval of October 1, 2018 Agenda

The AWG approved the agenda.

Moved by Chris M, seconded by Robin.

Carried

3. Approval of September 10, 2018 Minutes

Robin noted two corrections:

September 10th minutes – under item 4 “Business Arising” states:

e) Accessible Meeting Venue & Accessibility of City Hall

At the July 21, 2018 AWG meeting, Linda requested a meeting with Brad, Thomas Soulliere and Robin to explore options for making City Hall accessible.

Amendment:

On July 21, 2018, Linda requested a meeting with Brad, Thomas Soulliere and Robin to explore options for making City Hall accessible.

g) Update: Off-Leash Pilot

Action: Brad will look into whether a senior management person could do a review of Council reports for existence and adequacy of their accessibility impact statements.

Amendment:

Action: Brad will look into whether, **going forward**, a senior management person could do a review of Council reports for existence and adequacy of their accessibility impact statements **before they are posted**.

Moved by Chris M, seconded by Susan that the minutes be accepted as amended. Carried.

Moved by Robin, seconded by Susan that the September minutes and going forward, that the departments mentioned in the minutes, be copied on the minutes.

Carried.

Action: For September meeting and going forward, minutes referencing the work or responsibility of an organizational unit will be sent by Brad to the specific department and/or staff member.

4. Business Arising

a) Balancing Accessibility Considerations With Pollinator Habitat

Robin stated that Council's direction to Parks staff to meet with the AWG and Urban Food Table to come up with options to balance these two opposing views has not yet been fulfilled. She also reiterated Council's direction at the September 6 COTW meeting, for staff to come up with financial implications for AWG recommendations for the 2019 budget process. She feels a project is required to address the issue of accessibility in the planted environment and to look at the many options that have been pursued by other municipalities. Robin has supplied several references to Brad for Parks to review.

The two options Parks are committing to, are to promote public education and a plant selection reference list. The AWG was not party to coming up with these options which Parks has now presented to Council.

Robin feels that these options are more outward focused and do not acknowledge that the City has a leadership role, being one of the major institutional planters within the City's boundaries. A plant list does not have the same weight as a policy change. The Urban Forest Masterplan does not have human health as a consideration in planting decisions and there is a need to quantify the problem. Robin stated that the Parks one page report did not state the accessibility concerns in any detail, did not balance these concerns with those of pollinator habitat and therefore Council was not adequately informed.

Parks explained that public education would include information on the City website, facts sheets available to any third party wishing to develop a garden on City lands, signage at existing pollinator gardens raising awareness about allergen considerations in relation to the pollinator plants that are present. Parks envisioned that a reference list would assist them internally when selecting plants as well as inform third parties when developing commons gardens in particular. This work would be done internally with the existing budget. Parks does require those with a license to use public lands to adhere to planting requirements with regards to invasive species and this could be extended to include pollinators and allergen considerations. Robin stated that this needs to be written into policy and that this policy should go further by taking into consideration the location, in particular, in the vicinity of playgrounds or where people congregate, as directed by Council in their original motion. Robin added that there may be supply management required to ensure that low allergen trees (females) are available when the City replaces trees. She reminded the group that it had been suggested that there be a forum or lecture by an expert in this field and that Victoria could spearhead this as a regional project. A pilot could be taken on for a low allergen planting environment. Parks would need Council direction and a budget to make policy changes and take on such a project.

Other accessibility considerations other than allergens are the problem of tree roots raising the pavement over time, placement of planters which narrow pathways, planting of trees in bus Zones which obstruct ease of movement at multi bus stops, wood chip trails not accessible for walkers.

Motion:

Moved (Robin)

Seconded (Paul)

“that Council direct staff to plan, scope, cost and look at options to resource a project for 2019 to consult, research, analyze and develop a long-term, phased plan and policies for addressing accessibility of the planted environment, to remove barriers for people with environmental disabilities, consistent with the accessibility objectives of the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.”

Carried

Parks reported that they are starting to look at accessibility impacts in their planning and they have engaged a third party (Rick Hanson certification). AWG informed Parks that this third party does not assess for those experiencing cognitive, environmental, developmental barriers and those for persons on the autism spectrum or experiencing mental health challenges. These individuals are all protected by the Human Rights Code and their needs must be considered.

Next Steps: Parks will:

- continue with the two options they have already presented to Council;
- check in with Brad re financial implications of AWG recommendation;
- look at options which Robin has shared via Brad to help with scoping and costing a project; and connect back with AWG with regards to the status of public education.

AWG requests that Parks also check back for further AWG input, with regards to the project they are scoping and costing, prior to it being presented to Council.

Action: Brad will share the procedure Councilor Isitt put in place to handle motions from the AWG.

5. Successes & Kudos

Audible Pedestrian signals – Susan checked out the timing of audible signals downtown as they were reported at COTW on September 6 to all have been adjusted to match the visual signal. This was not the case at View and Douglas and Fort and Douglas. Linda informed Brad and they were adjusted within 24 hours. Thanks Brad for your prompt action.

Audible pedestrian signals at Government/Johnson – Staff is trying to find a workable solution for adjacent residential units, following receipt of a complaint. Steve suggested that in such a conflict, the measure required by people with disabilities should take precedence.

Robin reported that Engagement responded positively to her suggestion that allergy safety be mentioned in the annual public service announcements on Halloween safety. The announcement will now mention ingredient labeling on candy and treats and the Teal Pumpkin project which aims to avoid excluding children with allergies by offering non-food or allergy-safe items.

Legislative Services responded with new information to Robin's renewed request for accommodation to allow her to address Council, when there are barriers to attending City Hall in person. Chris Coats informed her that she is free to send in a video which they would air during the meeting, or she could have someone speak for her. This accommodation is not, however, publicized.

6. Action Items/Questions From September Minutes – Brad

Brad provided the answers below in response to the queries provided on the agenda.

- Staff cannot formally share reports with AWG prior to posting. Final staff reports are signed by the departmental Director, then they go through Leg. Services and the City Clerk and then are signed off by the City Manager and posted.
- Three senior staff are signing off on the staff reports – applicable director, City Clerk and the City Manager. The purpose of an AIS is to inform Council yet it appears that most staff, including those who sign off on reports do not know what should be included in an AIS. Brad assured AWG that this will be addressed by the Accessibility Framework.
- Brad has been given the ok to ask Adam (Crystal Pool architect) to phone Robin directly to discuss the configuration of the entrance area and possible need for an alternate entrance.

7. Review Of AWG Issues-Recommendations and Costing Implications for 2019 Budget Submission

1) **Crossing Over Bike Lanes On Pandora**

Brad: A white X has been painted on the pavement in the bike lane for the cyclists as they approach the mid-block crossings and crosswalks to bus stops from either direction. This is the standard road marking convention for such crossings. It was Linda's understanding that words would be painted. Brad indicated that words could be added later if required. The City is monitoring the situation by random spot checks to see if cyclists are stopping for pedestrians. Linda stated that blind persons are avoiding these crossings and that sighted pedestrians can see on-coming cyclists and make eye contact. Staff have not been able to do the public education that had been discussed as part of the solution. The City is in the midst of a Human Rights complaint regarding safety for blind person's crossing over the bike lane. Brad hopes to be able to report on this process at a future meeting.

The AWG suggests the following cost implications:

- a) Public education
- b) Monitoring plan and implementation
- c) Potential further solutions such as APS or reconfiguring bus stop at all Pandora crossings

2) Angle of Bus Ramps At City Hall and the Bay Centre

Steve stated that this is still an issue. Although Council supported staff's recommendation not to proceed with sidewalk modifications, they directed staff to continue to work with the AWG to find a solution. When will the new transit busses be in place? Will they be on the Douglas route? Is there a less expensive sidewalk modification option? How will the potential Centennial Square upgrades affect the sidewalk in question?

AWG suggest the following cost implications:

- a) Staff time to address these questions and examine alternatives and research how long the proposed solutions by BC Transit and Centennial Square revitalization will actually take.

3) Balancing Accessibility Considerations With Pollinator Habitat

Dealt with earlier in the meeting.

4) Accessible City Managed Parking

Robin reminded the table of the AWG motion recommending hiring a specialized consultant to study accessible parking demand and deficiencies of publicly provided parking. Since then, Council directed staff to scope hiring a consultant to look at standards for private accessible parking.

On July 12, Council approved staff's recommendation under agenda item J.5, *Bylaw for Review of Off-Street Parking Regulations and Delegation of Minor Parking Variances*, that Council:

Direct staff to report back to Council with a scope of work, anticipated timelines and estimated costs associated with a review of barrier-free parking needs assessment in the City of Victoria. This assessment shall provide recommendations for potential regulations and guidelines that could be adopted by the City.

AWG made a follow-up motion to the one made in April 2018 recommending the hiring of a consultant.

Moved (Robin)

Seconded (Steve)

That Council direct staff, when reporting back to Council as part of Financial Plan with resource estimates for AWG recommendations, that staff consider combining the AWG's recommendations regarding conducting a parking study for City-provided parking, with the scope of the accessible parking study for privately-provided parking, to determine any efficiencies that might be gained.

Carried

5) Truncated Domes And No Lip Curbs

Brad had to step out of the meeting so it was decided that this issue needed continuing discussion. AWG suggests the following for costing consideration:

- a) work required to create and promote public education, properly evaluate the truncated domes pilot, make recommendations and create a new standard
- b) inventory of curb cuts that do not comply with current practice, either because they are zero lip or too much of a lip, in priority, based on location
- c) Policy work to update the bylaw for curb cuts and truncated domes
- d) Budget placeholder to do the work to change the non-compliant curb cuts through a proposed multiyear plan starting in 2019

6) APS/Audible Signals

AWG suggests the following for costing consideration:

- a) Work required to create and promote public education, properly evaluate the APS pilot, make recommendations and create a new standard
- b) Inventory of additional prime intersection/crossings
- c) Budget placeholder for certain number of intersections/crossings to be addressed each year starting in 2019

Motion:

MOVED (Linda)

SECONDED (Robin)

That Council direct staff to develop and implement a plan to install APS/audible signals at all existing controlled intersections/crossings, to be completed by 2021 and that staff work with the AWG to determine priority intersections/crossings to be addressed each year. That the new standard be that APS or audible signals be installed whenever a new pedestrian signal is installed."

CARRIED (with one abstention)

7) Access To Webcasting And Council Documents

AWG does not see many costs but suggest the following be considered by Legislative Services:

- a) Staff time to look at what enhancements can be done as part of the new system's implementation trouble-shooting

- b) Enhancements to remove barriers, such as closed captioning and improving remote access to address Council, enhanced reliability, and increasing the number of webcast events to make a greater number of events accessible.

The Accessibility Framework consultant may be able to comment on best practice and highest priority improvements, based on its research into prevalence of type of disability in Victoria.

8) AWG Accessibility Survey

The AWG worked hard to develop the survey but staff never made plans to analyze results, despite requests and queries. While an automated tabulation of quantitative results was produced and has been shared with some projects, its utility is limited because it does not provide an understanding of the reasons behind answers about accessibility/inaccessibility of certain facilities. To date, no one has made an effort to obtain full value from the work of the AWG and the many respondents by fully analyzing results. This sends a poor message about the importance of the work of the AWG and the cause of accessibility. The Accessibility Framework consultants could find very valuable information in the full results.

AWG voted in favour, in principle, of the following motion. The motion was then reworded and circulated to AWG after the meeting as follows:

Moved (Robin)

Seconded (LINDA)

That Council direct staff to provide an estimate for the cost of completing analysis of the AWG Accessibility Survey which closed May 2017, on a priority basis, and report the results to the AWG and Council. The analysis should include theory-based quantitative analysis to help understand who said what and a summary of write-in responses, to aid in understanding the reasons behind tick box answers. The qualitative analysis should be done in a way that protects privacy of respondents (e.g., analyzed by an independent third party).

Carried (by email vote)

9) Accessibility Of City Website And Documents including Active Living Guide

Engagement and Parks should cost financial implications to bring the website and ALG up to current standards for accessibility.

Issues for which AF may provide recommendations or be required to do additional work and therefore a budget placeholder is indicated

10. Reasonable Accommodation Process for recreational and other programs

Parks should cost:

Additional MNP work to develop:

- a) a disability accommodation process for recreation facilities and programs
- b) a reasonable accommodation process for all City services
- c) a plan to provide resources for unplanned work arising from reasonable accommodation requests received during the fiscal year.

11. Accessibility of City Hall (scent reduction and pet restriction policies)

Various departments + MNP should cost:

- a) Human Resources (possibly) to research and develop a general application scent-reduction policy, train and implement.
- b) Engagement to develop and implement a public communications strategy for the general scent reduction and pet restriction policies
- c) MNP – Conduct research and make recommendations re. pet restrictions to reduce animal allergens
- d) Facilities to estimate cost of improving/converting lighting in public areas of City Hall to address barriers for people with certain neurological conditions and quantify the problem in other City facilities and staff areas of City Hall.

Moved (Linda)

Seconded (Robin)

Council direct staff to include in criteria for making City Hall accessible, accessible artificial lighting, particularly in public areas.

Carried

As discussed last meeting, some types of lighting used in public buildings makes facilities inaccessible to people with neurological disorders and other health conditions and disabilities by triggering migraines and epileptic seizures. Examples of other conditions affected include: ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, concussion, specific learning disabilities or intellectual disabilities, traumatic brain injury (TBI). Information on the barriers and better types of artificial lighting have been provided by an affected resident through the AWG to staff.

Action: Councillor Loveday to forward background info he has to Brad.

12. Staff and Council Accessibility Awareness Training

The AWG has consistently recommended delivery of staff training as highest priority item for the Accessibility Framework. Members have shared information on delivery-ready training curriculum and resources with Brad.

Human Resources, in conjunction with MNP should provide estimates for staff and budget resources for *delivery* of widespread general accessibility awareness training in

2019 to staff and Council, subject to recommendations arising from the Framework deliverables (a training needs assessment and sources report).

13. Accessible Public Consultations

Engagement should cost development of a policy and process documents such as checklists and an inventory of venues for improving accessibility of the City's consultations, to allow people with a wide variety of disabilities to participate fully and influence decisions that affect them. MNP will provide recommendations that Engagement would be responsible for carrying out.

14. Single Point of Entry for Information and Accessibility Concerns

Engagement and Customer Service should estimate costs to Implement Accessibility Framework recommendations for creating and publicizing a single point of contact and coordination of accessibility.

15. Accessibility Impact Statements Policy and Guidance

The following motion was introduced at the meeting and circulated to AWG members who cast their vote by email.

Moved (Robin)

Seconded (Linda)

That Council direct staff to consider and bring forward proposals and scenarios for providing ongoing operational funding for accessibility, consistent with the AWG recommendation of December 2016 that accessibility funding be allocated annually.

Further, the AWG recommends that one-time operational funding for 2019 be allocated, sufficient to address recommendations arising from the Accessibility Framework, with the highest priority activity being delivery of accessibility awareness training to staff and Council, consistent with recommendations from the Accessibility Framework consultant's pending training needs assessment.

Carried (by email vote)

16. AWG Governance and Membership

Legislative Services should estimate staff time and any other costs for developing and approving a new TOR for the AWG and implementing recommendations from the Accessibility Framework regarding governance.

8. New Business

- Robin: Accessibility and Planning/Development – invite Planning staff
- Robin: PAWS in Parks

- Susan: Sandwich boards on sidewalks
 - AWG meeting with AF consultant – Wednesday, October 3rd at 4:00.
- 9.** Next meeting – October 3, 2018 with the Accessibility Framework Consultants and **November 5th** regular AWG meeting.
- 10.** Adjournment – 5:40 pm.