

Accessibility Working Group Minutes  
April 1, 2019

1. AWG members present - Linda Bartram (Chair), Robin Bayley, Susan Gallagher, Steve Bertrand, Chris Dobbie, Chris Marks.

Absent – Paul Jones

Liaison - Doug Nutting

City Staff - Kelly Anne Malcomson (Admin Support), Jim Handy (City Planner, Development Services), Philip Bellefontaine (Assistant Director Transportation), Sarah Webb (Transportation)

Council Liaisons- Sarah Potts, Jeremy Loveday

Sign language interpreters – Mary Warner & Sandy

Visitor - Christine Paisley

2. Approval of Agenda - Enforcement of Sandwich Board Bylaw added to report back

Moved – Linda, seconded – Robin, carried

3. March 4, 2019 minutes were approved with the following change – Doug Nutting to be listed as Liaison not Staff liaison

Moved – Linda, seconded – Susan, carried

4. Levels of Public Engagement

Based on the circulated document outlining the five levels of public engagement; inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower, staff and the AWG have not been on the same page as to the level of engagement when discussing many of the accessibility issues in the

past. Sarah Webb indicated that the City engages at the information, consultation and sometimes the involve level, whereas, AWG is under the assumption that the level of engagement (LOE) is at the involve and collaborate level. Jeremy indicated that when he makes a motion to direct staff to “work with” the AWG, he means collaborate.

Action: Going forward, the chair will utilize the LOE to manage meeting agendas and the LOE will be indicated on the agenda. The LOE will also help Determine if staff should attend AWG meetings in person or if a written report is adequate.

Action: Sarah will provide AWG, through Doug, the City of Victoria Engagement Framework

Action: New “AWG” Terms of Reference should specify at which level of engagement the committee will function, so communication is clear from the outset.

## 5. Business arising

### a) Reports

#### 1. Accessibility Impact Statements (AIS):

Sarah Webb provided the following response from the City Clerk’s office pertaining to AWG’s questions about Accessibility Impact Statements.

“As for your question, the City Clerk confirmed that their team added information to the staff report template as soon as the direction was given from council to do so. Indeed, there is guidance available right now that all City staff use when drafting staff reports (this is pasted below for your reference). Application of the guidance is up to each division, with oversight by department directors.”

Accessibility Impact Statement

The purpose of this section of the staff report is communicate to Council and the public how accessibility has been taken into consideration and how any accessibility impacts are being mitigated. Consideration should be given to the broad definition of disability and potential barriers to people with disabilities.

Accessibility is a general term used to describe the degree of ease that something can be used and enjoyed by persons with a disability. Disability is defined as a physical, sensory, developmental or mental condition or a health problem that significantly restricts the performance of one or more of a person's daily life activities.

Accessibility impacts should be considered at all stages of an initiative from concept to implementation. Planning for accessibility at the early stages of an initiative is more cost effective than retrofitting accessibility considerations.

Examples of accessibility considerations may include:

- Report that there are no impacts on accessibility if applicable.
- Describe the date and outcome of consultations with the Accessibility Working Group and community groups representing the disability most likely to be affected.
- Cite legislative obligations and accessibility objectives in the Official Community Plan and describe how these are met.
- Cite physical accessibility or universal design standards and describe how they are met.
- For public documents, public meetings and public signage, describe how accessibility is addressed for people with disabilities.
- Describe alternative access processes that will be in place during service disruptions or construction.

AWG feedback re these guidelines: First guideline should be moved to the bottom of the list as there may be a tendency not to give accessibility much thought if the implications are not obvious. If the AIS indicates that there is no accessibility impact, there should be an

explanation as to how this determination was arrived at and why staff feel there is no impact.

Robin has observed that staff are not following these guidelines and that AIS are, for the most part, totally inadequate.

Robin also pointed out the shortcomings of AIS in Planning reports. Jim Handy explained that in Some areas there are very strong accessibility policies and guidelines and in others there are very few. Development permits which are reported to Council and therefore require an AIS, only address the outside of the building and the accessibility considerations are few if any in many situations (e.g. height of a fence). Building permit applications, which would possibly involve more accessibility design details, do not come to Council and therefore there is not an AIS.

Chris M. would be a good resource for the City as he requires an accessible suite and has built his own. He has been approached by a developer who intends to build townhouses which would not be accessible, so he was not interested.

Jim Handy is open to receiving comments on future AIS.

2. Lack of a formal contract for Doug Nutting and clear guidelines around privacy and confidentiality

Doug provided the following from Thomas Soulliere:

"...keys points; your willingness/capacity to assist on a temporary basis; our belief that you are a very capable representative with a long and positive history working with the City, stakeholders, and families to identify and reduce barriers; no concerns about any additional risks relating to your participation.... this assistance could be considered as related to your role with RIV, as you assist with municipal projects from time to time....I do not feel we need any further measures to ensure your professional approach or address speculation about potential risks."

One AWG member expressed continuing concerns with the arrangement. The chair indicated that AWG has two options: move forward under this arrangement or say we won't function under this arrangement. The chair indicated that she sensed that it was the will of most of the AWG members to continue under this arrangement.

3. Issues List updating

Action: Doug will talk to Thomas to clarify who will do what and how. Also ask if there is an existing project tracking system that the City already uses that could be implemented.

Action: Linda and Doug will discuss accessibility. Linda will supply categories used previously.

4. Two issues Councilors have worked on this month

Accessibility Framework – Council liaisons feel that training of Council and senior staff prior to approval of the report to Council would be beneficial. Robin's Discussion paper has been shared with some staff.

Philip reported that Staff is contemplating which should come first, Accessibility Town Hall or AWG review of draft report. He confirmed that they do intend to share the draft AF report with AWG. They are developing next steps and may have consultants join an AWG meeting.

AWG feels it needs to have an opportunity to comment on the report in April/May, prior to the Town Hall in June. If the draft report is to be presented to Council by the end of Q2 (end of June), and if AWG is to have an opportunity to review and influence the draft report which goes to Council (minimum LOE involved) then it needs to be brought into the process as soon as possible (May at the latest).

Action: Philip to let AWG know as soon as staff has a plan in place.

Action: Staff to determine what level of engagement they will be working under with regards to AWG's involvement in the review of the draft AF report

The requested notes from COTW meeting where staff gave a verbal update on AWG issues have not been provided to AWG to date.

5. Communicating about APS

Action: Doug and Thomas will follow up with Engagement as discussed at March meeting.

With regards to future APS installation, Philip Bellefontaine provided the following response:

“Staff agree that there is value in having an APS program based on identified priorities beyond the “opportunity” driven program through traffic signal rebuilds and new signal builds. Prioritization would be informed by staff's own technical analysis, co-ordination with other capital projects, public requests, AWG input and other safety concerns. This program does not currently exist but will be recommended within the 2020 and future years budgets. In the meantime, staff are able to advise that two additional intersections have had APS installed - Menzies and Superior (along with improvements to the pedestrian timings) and at Fernwood and Pandora.”

6. Street planting plan requested by Council

This is part of the implementation of the Urban Forest Master Plan. Robin met with Parks staff to discuss. They were only willing to discuss the two initiatives already reported; public education and Plant list. This list is very narrow and will not address accessibility concerns. There is still no written Criteria/policy for plant/tree selection which considers the impact on human health in any plans and it was hoped that Council would request this in the street planting plan. There is a big gap between AWG's approach and that of staff

and this gap has not been reported to Council by staff. Staff has not considered AWG's options as to how to find a balance as directed by Council. Council liaisons assumed that staff was working with AWG (LOE collaborate) and that things were progressing, all be it slowly, towards finding a balance but AWG states that this is not the case. Jeremy stated that there is an education element to this issue and it requires more consideration.

Action: Jeremy & Sarah will review the issue again and get back to AWG if AWG action is required.

7. Children with allergies & City rec programs – Robin met with Rec staff and Robin's input on the accessibility and inclusion page and related form was well received. She anticipates that there will be future discussions on other allergy-related concerns. Linda reported that the on-line index listing of the accessibility page on the website is accessible to screen reader users but the guide itself is not.
8. Enforcement of Sandwich Board Bylaw – The report to COTW was a Status report. It did not mention how enforcement could be stepped up as per Council's direction. It appears harder to report a sign infraction than other concerns. The City needs to make it easier to complain. AWG suggested: utilizing the Connect app and placing a sticker on all signs with a number to call to report infractions.

Action: Doug will follow up with the Bylaw department

b) Safe angle of bus ramp at City Hall

Council directed staff to continue to work with AWG to explore options after the \$200,000 for a sidewalk upgrade was not recommended or approved a year ago.

Doug circulated the following report from Philip Bellefontaine:  
"Staff will discuss with BC Transit opportunities to deploy kneeling buses on Douglas Street until all the buses are replaced in

2021. They may not be able to commit to this. Relocating the bus stop to a location where a full height curb exists has been looked at but regrettably cannot be supported by staff as it will require relocation of an existing “cluster” street light, moving the bus ID pole and potentially the bus shelter also.”

Steve reported that different buses will possibly take some of the issue away if it can kneel low enough, but it still may not be safe. The sidewalk needs to be built up. There needs to be a landing Zone so there is not a need to lower the bus. He reported that Langford have built a loading platform to address this issue. A wooden platform could be removed if sidewalk upgrade was to be done in the future.

The Centennial Square redevelopment is not happening in the near future so there is no need to wait to address the sidewalk.

Action: Philip Bellefontaine will look into options for a landing zone and report back to AWG

- c) Crossing over bike lane “Pilot” – Yates and Wharf – Sarah and Philip clarified that pedestrians can activate a flashing amber light using an APS. This is a warning signal indicating that cyclists should yield to pedestrians, not a red traffic signal indicating the need to stop. There will be some sort of audible component to let pedestrians know that the amber light has been activated. The amber light will be in the cyclist’s sightline. Sidewalk signage cannot be lowered as it must be above pedestrian height for safety. Painted signage on the pavement (Stop for Peds” and bollards are not being considered at this time.

AWG reported that cyclists need to be told that if a pedestrian (especially a blind pedestrian) is standing at the crosswalk, the amber light means cyclists should stop, not just proceed with caution, even if the pedestrian does not make eye contact with them. Blind people cannot make eye contact and therefore once they activate the flashing light, they will have to presume it is safe to proceed.

Action: Sarah will share examples of past public education conducted by the City and step up the message in future awareness efforts.

d) Truncated dome pilot

Philip Bellefontaine provided the following report prior to the meeting: “For future signal rebuilds, significant capital works and at new traffic signals the City expects to be installing truncated domes as part of the “standard” design. The current rollout of the truncated domes at a number of locations in the City was an attempt to establish information on the ability and appropriateness of attempting to retrofit existing conditions without other expensive changes as well as the suitability and quality of the materials being used. In addition, it was recognized by the city that the application of these devices into environments where other deficiencies exist, for example at historically designed curb letdowns with steep grades or which are not aligned with the crosswalk, would result in some level of improvement but would not always provide the most complete, finished or high standard of treatment. This pilot has not been resourced to include comprehensive analysis on layout, colour, size and spacing of the domes and so on. On completion of the intersections in the current program, feedback from the AWG on whether there is value in continuing to try and retrofit further intersections within the context of the constraints and deficiencies identified above will be welcomed.”

Philip also reported that the City recognizes that truncated domes have been used in many other jurisdictions for years and their efficacy is not in question. It is the City’s goal to come up with the optimum curb treatment to best meet the needs of all pedestrians. AWG reminded staff that they had been assured by Brad that no further “no lip” curbs were being installed but this does not appear to be the case. AWG also informed staff of the history of this issue which dates back to AWG’s inception.

e) Scramble crosswalk – public awareness

AWG is concerned, and reports indicate that the scramble crosswalk will make crossing the road more challenging for persons with disabilities. Staff would like to meet with AWG to explain their view that it will make crossing safer. The scramble crosswalk is a done deal, so the level of engagement would be “inform”.

Action: Linda will canvas AWG members to see if they would like to proceed with such a presentation from staff

Staff would also like AWG to make suggestions as to how best to orientate persons with disabilities to the scramble crosswalk.

f) Paws in Parks – deferred

g) Food at public engagement sessions - deferred

6. New Business

Dallas Rd construction – deferred

For future agenda: truncated domes at mid-block bus stops

7. Next meeting – May 6, 2019. Robin asked if it could be the previous Monday, April 29. Linda will canvas the members.

Deferred Agenda Items:

Paws in Parks

Food at public engagement sessions

Dallas Road construction

Truncated domes at mid-block bus stops

List of transactions that have to be done in person at City Hall or cost more if done remotely

Accessible voting