



MINUTES – ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 22, 2022, 4:30 P.M.

ESQUIMALT NATION ROOM, CITY HALL, 1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt People
Meeting conducted electronically via Zoom and in-person

PRESENT: S. Jennings (Chair), S. Hough, L. Bartram, C. Marks, N. Moss, C. Paisley,
J. Scott, P. Singh

STAFF PRESENT: A. Galiev – Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Lead, A. Bronee – Manager of
Communications & Engagement, M. Harris – Strategic Planning &
Communications Advisor, B. Roder – Committee Secretary

A. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

B. Land Acknowledgement

The Chair acknowledged the City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations communities, and thanked them for allowing us to live, work and play on their lands.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved By S. Jennings
Seconded by unanimous consent

That the agenda be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

D. READING OF MINUTES

D.1 Minutes from the meeting held January 10, 2023

Moved By L. Bartram
Seconded by unanimous consent

That the minutes from the meeting held January 10, 2023 to be adopted with the following revisions:

F.1 Patio Bylaw Update

Committee discussed the following:

1. *Suggested a minimum of one accessible table or a percentage of the number of tables, whichever is higher*
2. *Could businesses consider having 2 or 3 accessible tables in case 1 or 2 are already occupied and that the location and distance of accessible tables from the entrance and the maneuverability to the table be considered*
3. *Discourage the use of high tables as they reduce the number of tables which might be used and if used, limit number*
4. *Furniture placement, size and height as well as number must be considered*
5. *Challenging for people who are blind to navigate around a sidewalk patio when delineated by bollards or planters with spaces in between . All patios should have a continuous railing delineating the perimeter.*
6. *Temporary tables and chairs become obstacles for persons who are blind and therefore something delineating a perimeter should be used such as stanchions with heavy cords strung between. this needs further discussion.*
7. *.*
8. *There is concern about the City suggesting that businesses consult with agencies and suggested that the City provide some funding or a fee-for-service to individuals or agencies to provide feedback.*
9. *Might staff consider accessible parking locations be linked to applications for new sidewalk patios?*
10. *Recommended that menus should be available online if possible.*
11. *Could recommend a braille or large font menu for patio guidelines, but not mandate*
12. *A patio is more accessible if the designated entrance and exit are the same. Remove separate entrance and exit requirement.*
13. *Applauded incorporating Opals Ratings – Allergy Friendly Plants into patio guidelines*
14. *90 patios currently participating in Build Back Victoria program, and staff anticipate about 30 businesses will apply for the new Sidewalk Café program which will be available in the spring*
15. *Patios participating in the Sidewalk Café program will be required to comply with the new bylaw and guidelines*
16. *Rectangular wheeled planters might work as the patio perimeter*
17. *Sandwich boards and signs can impair wheelchair maneuverability and be an obstacle for blind persons.*
18. *Noted the importance of reporting sandwich boards and sign infractions to the City, and indicating whether they are licenced (sticker displayed on sandwich board). Observed more barriers with increased number of sandwich boards since more patios have opened during the pandemic*
19. *Suggested that sandwich board advertising be replaced by signage attached to building or patio structures*
20. *Patios must abide by the City's electrical requirements, including that electrical cords cannot run along the ground*
21. *Staff will bring the patio bylaw updates back to the Committee within the next couple of months as it will be going to Council at the end of March*

F.7 Committee Updates – Roundtable

L. Bartram requested that floating bus stops be added to the action log. She noted that the installation of flashing amber lights at floating bus stops has been added to Provincial Active Transportation Design Guidelines despite the fact that this mitigation has not been proven effective or been requested by persons who are blind. TransLink and CNIB are conducting studies and a review of this and other existing guidelines for inclusive (floating) bus stops next to bike lanes in the next six months.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

S. Hough joined the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

E. Remarks from the Chair

The Chair expressed appreciation for the continued work of the Committee.

F. NEW BUSINESS

F.1 City's New Accessible Meeting and Events Toolkit presentation (Communications and Engagement Department)

Manager of Communications and Engagement, and Strategic Planning and Communications Advisor provided a presentation to the Committee regarding the new Accessible Meeting and Events Toolkit, which is designed to assist City staff in planning and conducting virtual and in-person meetings, events, and engagement activities to ensure they are accessible to all community members.

Committee discussed the following:

- 1. Noted Council passed the framework in October 2022*
- 2. Addressed need for scent-reduction and noted that the wording should be to avoid usage of scents rather than suggest reducing scent*
- 3. Send suggestions to the Communications and Engagement department staff*

P. Singh joined the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

F.2 Floating Bus Stops

Committee discussed the following:

- 1. Human rights complaint regarding the floating bus stops launched against the City by the Canadian Federation of the Blind (CFB) regarding unsafe bus stops*
- 2. Noted concerns with approximately five floating bus stops on both Pandora and Wharf that require pedestrians to cross bike lanes to access the bus stops*
- 3. Concerned for safety of citizens, particularly for the blind community*
- 4. Complaint was based on discrimination towards blind people and the Human Rights decision concluded that the blind had been discriminated against.*

5. *The decision of the Human Rights Tribunal also unfortunately implied that the installation of a flashing amber light was a satisfactory mitigation despite the fact that this solution has not been found to be effective and the blind community spoke against it.*
6. *Based on the Human Rights decision, the City installed, at the floating bus stops, a flashing amber light and a button that, when pressed, states “Yellow lights flashing. Cross with caution. Vehicles may not stop”*
7. *Concerned as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has now used the Human Rights decision to make recommendations in the Active Transportation Design Guide and that other communities are potentially planning to or installing inaccessible floating bus stops.*
8. *The CNIB Foundation and Translink are conducting two separate studies to review floating bus stops to assess safety and accessibility concerns. They are keeping each other informed. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is participating in the TransLink discussions. An AAC member has also attended a stakeholder meeting. AAC members have provided feedback through the Translink stakeholder survey, Design Guide for Inclusive Bus Stops Next to Bike Lanes, forwarded by the City’s Manager of Sustainable Transportation Planning and Development.*
9. *Stressed that the City needs to come up with an alternative solution to address the safety concerns which still exist with the floating bus stops*
10. *Recounted instances where Committee members or members of the public have had issues navigating floating bus stops with mobility devices*
11. *Requested that staff or the Committee brings this back to a future meeting for further discussion once the CNIB and TransLink studies have concluded.*

F.3 Committee Updates – Roundtable

S. Jennings informed the Committee that Yellow Cab has removed themselves from the Taxi Saver Program, and that she has submitted a letter to management, requesting that they rescind their decision.

Committee discussed the following:

1. *Provincial government has granted \$3 million in rebates to taxi operators to support taxi service accessibility*
2. *Noted ongoing challenges with taxi services and frequent misuse of accessible taxi vans for airport/ferry pick ups*
3. *Concerned that taxi operators participating in the Taxi Saver Program aren’t receiving reimbursement from BC Transit in a timely manner*
4. *Review of BC Transit’s Taxi Saver Program needed*

G. Next Meeting Agenda & Date – March 14, 2023

Committee discussed and made the following updates to the AAC Action Log:

1. *Clover Point Infrastructure Changes was postponed from March to April 2023*
2. *A discussion on the City’s compliance and a facilitated session on the Accessible British Columbia Act to be held in March 2023*
3. *At the March 2023 meeting, discuss coordination, including noting specific locations the Committee is interested in visiting, of the curb cut and tactile walking surface indicators field trip to be held in May 2023*

4. *Scent-free/reduction policy to be addressed September 2023, with staff attendance requested to discuss the concerns with the language being too soft, and enforcement and compliance of the policy. The Committee is interested in the opportunity to share their lived experiences and discuss public education.*

H. ADJOURNMENT

Moved By J. Scott

Seconded by unanimous consent

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY