

## MINUTES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS MEETING  
BOARDROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE, 411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC  
WEDNESDAY, 2022-SEP-07 AT 4:04 P.M.

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Present: Councillor S. Armstrong, Chair  
A. Breen, At Large Member (joined electronically)  
S. Cameron, At Large Member (joined electronically)  
S. Hamel, At Large Member (joined electronically 4:05 pm)  
J. Maffin, At Large Member (joined electronically)  
R. Pike, At Large Member (joined electronically)  
E. Williamson, At Large Member (joined electronically)

Absent: Councillor Z. Maartman  
R. Harlow, At Large Member  
D. Hollins, At Large Member  
T. Davenock, At Large Member

Staff: B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works  
L. Wark, Director, Recreation and Culture  
L. Brinkman, Manager, Community planning  
L. Clarkson, Manager, Recreation Services  
B. Thomas, Assistant Manager, Transportation  
K. Robertson, Deputy City Clerk  
A. Mac Coll, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS MEETING TO ORDER:

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The Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness Meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Monday, 2022-JUN-22 at 4:00 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

S. Hamel joined the meeting electronically at 4:05 p.m.

4. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) Housing Needs Assessment 2022

Introduced by Lisa Brinkman, Manager, Community Planning noted that the presenter plans to gather input from the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (the Committee) after the presentation and that data and information collected from the Committee will inform future projects for family friendly housing to encourage the appropriate types of housing needed in Nanaimo.

Presentation:

1. Hollie McKeil, Senior Community Planner, RPP, MCIP, City Spaces Consultant.  
Highlights included:

- The Housing Needs Report project (the project) now follows legislation that requires municipalities to write a report every 5 years to help understand the following:
  - current housing needs;
  - future housing needs;
  - identify current issues and gaps in housing and what is working well;
  - understanding who is disproportionately affected by the housing gaps; and,
  - how the housing is meeting peoples needs who are disproportionately affected
- Phase 1 of the project involved collecting data, research and engagement planning
- The Committee is the first group the project has come to for community engagement for the start of Phase 2
- There are plans to meet with local groups, service providers, non-profit housing providers, property managers, developers, indigenous organizations, land-based first nations, and people with lived experience with homelessness and low housing security
- Census data, released at the end of September 2022, will be used in the housing needs assessment and the project
- The housing benchmark price has doubled across most housing forms in Nanaimo
- The housing cost increase in Nanaimo has risen faster than current incomes in Nanaimo
- There has been a 38% increase in rent over the last ten years in purpose built rentals, which does not include secondary market rentals (secondary suites and rented condominiums)
- Rent control in BC coupled with long-term tenancy does not accurately show what the actual rental prices currently are and the 38% increase in rent would actually be higher
- Currently on third party rental trackers online (ex: Zumper) a 1 bedroom in Nanaimo would cost an average of \$1,600 a month
- Low vacancy rates result in higher rental prices
- A healthy vacancy rate is 3%, and Nanaimo has not been at a healthy vacancy rate since 2014

- In 2016, 14% of all households in Nanaimo were experiencing a core housing need such as unaffordable, unsuitable or inadequate housing situations
- Over half of renters are unable to find affordable housing
- 32% of all renters in Nanaimo are in some form of a core housing need and the following are those at higher risk:
  - lone parent families
  - single persons
  - young adults (15-24)
  - seniors
  - indigenous households
  - recent immigrants
  - those who are differently abled
- In 2021, there was a minimum of 433 people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo which does not include periodic, episodic, or transitional homelessness

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Housing prices have dropped recently and updated data is important to be done throughout the project as things change in the housing and rental market
- Numbers in the presentation are from the yearly Real Estate Board Report
- Persons with Disabilities (PWD) assistance families who rent have an extremely low income, and additionally have needs for accessible housing leaving this group with a lack of safety in the few available units
- The ability to find rentals if medical equipment is needed by the a renter is very sparse
- Those who are under housed living in vehicles, couch surfing, and RV's struggle in the winter and are not counted when assessing the homeless population in Nanaimo
- Shelter on PWD is \$375 per month and many are unable to pay to rent a bedroom
- Those needing 24 hour care, or care support in general, cannot find rentals that are affordable that meet their needs
- Suites and rental homes that are accessible to handy darts and transportation are needed
- Market housing, which is generally \$1200 a month, is too high even when using the safer ceiling subsidy of \$298 a month
- Anyone on PWD assistance is not eligible for other rental subsidies
- City Council is going to UBCM and is putting forward a motion regarding affordable housing as well as issues regarding housing in general
- Intersectionality and lack of privileges from different communities, including marginalization, has impacted those who are a part of the LGBT2QS+ community
- Covert transphobia (anti trans bias), discrimination to queers, and discrimination of queer youth, hinders these members of our community from receiving employment and housing opportunities
- Seniors are not leaving their large single family homes as the seniors' housing being built is not level entry and apartments are not appealing to them
- Renters and landlord rights need to be balanced to ensure landlords are putting their empty homes or suites on the market

- In 1990, there were only 3 places listed to rent in Nanaimo, with prices being 60% of peoples' income
- Noise is a consideration with families and children with autism when finding a suitable rental space, including street noise, animals, etc.
- Children with autism can be loud when transitioned from their home environment or having a hard day and can cause conflict when others live below them or in apartment buildings
- Sound quality in construction needs to be elevated to match apartment buildings in European countries, that seem to have higher standards of sound quality
- There is a large need for 3 bedroom apartments for families

5. REPORTS:

(a) Transit Stop Accessibility

Introduced by Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works.

Barbara Thomas, Assistant Manager, Transportation spoke regarding transit stop accessibility. Highlights included:

- The Transit Stop Accessibility working group (the Working Group) has met four times in 2022
- The Working Group provided recommendations to the Committee and is seeking support for these recommendations to go to Council
- Site visits to bus stops around the City of Nanaimo (the City) were done when researching best practices for Nanaimo transit stops
- Research was conducted on the routes currently used at the transit stops in Nanaimo, around the Province, and the Federal Transportation Association of Canada's guidelines regarding best practices
- The transit stops accessibility improvements fell into the following three categories:
  - visibility of transit stops
  - information available at transit stops
  - consistency of engineering design standards
- Visibility of transit stops requires adequate street lighting and lighting of shelters, way finding with visual cues and signage, and tactile and visual media near shelter
- Information available at transit stops requires online information regarding which bus stops are fully accessible, signage at bus stops to indicate the stop is an accessible location, and tactile information panels with phone numbers and scheduling information in braille
- Consistency of engineering design standards for shelter locations, sidewalk width, crosswalks, bike yield to pedestrian signage, bollards, and tactile warning surface indicators
- Using best practices and implementing improvements at the transit stops will be easier at new stops and will be harder to implement retrofits at current transit stops
- Education is needed for bus operators to ensure they understand how the accessible transit stops work

It was moved and seconded that the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness support the findings of the Transit Stop Accessibility Working Group and recommend that Council direct staff to:

- Update the City of Nanaimo's existing best practices for Complete Streets to consider the findings of the Transit Stop Accessibility Working Group;
- Develop an internal process to retrofit existing transit stops while consulting appropriate stakeholders; and,
- Work with the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness members to determine and implement appropriate accessibility upgrades at existing transit stops.

The motion carried unanimously.

(b) Committee Acknowledgement and Thanks

Lynn Wark, Director, Recreation & Culture spoke regarding the accomplishments of the Committee.

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Ongoing participation from the Committee for the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process resulted in the City Plan
- The LEAP program review was successfully completed and the changes are currently being implemented as recommended by the Committee
- The Maffeo Sutton Inclusive Playground site visit and feedback from the Committee on Phase 1 of the project has been taken into account for Phase 2 of the project
- The Gender Diversity and Inclusion recommendations were completed and passed by Council
- The Nanaimo Aquatic Centre (NAC) water feature plan was reviewed by some Committee members which will replace the current boat at NAC
- The Beban Pool accessibility audit was done with help from Committee members
- The Outdoor Learning Centre design proposed for the Beban Social Centre was reviewed by Committee members for inclusion and accessibility
- The completion of the Departure Bay accessible matt
- Staff acknowledged the work completed by the Committee and co-chairs, and thanked them for their service

6. QUESTION PERIOD:

The Committee received no questions from the public regarding agenda items

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 4:56 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

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DEPUTY CITY CLERK