



MINUTES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS MEETING

Wednesday, 2026-JAN-14, 4:00 p.m.
Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC

Present: Councillor H. Eastmure
Councillor S. Armstrong* (joined at 4:24 p.m.; disconnected at 5:19 p.m.)
T. Brzovic, At Large Member* (disconnected at 5:25 p.m.)
L. Derksen, At Large Member*
A. Dillingham-Lacoursiere, At Large Member
S. Enns, At Large Member
R. Harlow, At Large Member
T. Hirasawa, At Large Member
B. Kinrade, At Large Member*
J. Maffin, At Large Member*
S. Pump, At Large Member*
A. Stuart, At Large Member
N. Sugiyama, At Large Member

Staff: N. Vracar, Deputy Corporate Officer
C. Davis, Deputy Director, Parks and Natural Areas
L. Clarkson, Manager, Recreation Services
K. MacDonald, Manager, Parks Operations
J. Rose, Manager, Transportation
P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner
K. Mayes, Planner
K. Lundgren, Zoom Moderator
L. Young, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

* Denotes electronic meeting participation as authorized by "Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272"

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

3. ADOPTION OF 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 2025-NOV-12 at 4:00 p.m. be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) 2026 Local Government Election Planning

Presentation:

1. N. Vracar, Deputy Corporate Officer, provided an on-screen presentation included in the agenda package. Highlights included:
 - The Legislative Services Department is planning the election in collaboration with other City departments and key partners such as the Local Government Management Association (LGMA), Elections BC, and CivicInfo BC
 - Advance voting opportunities will be available on the two Wednesdays prior to General Voting Day (2026-OCT-17)
 - The City uses the “Vote Anywhere” model, which allows electors to choose the voting location they wish to attend in order to allow flexibility and make the voting process more accessible
 - Staff are currently conducting site visits at potential voting locations and assessing suitability of the facilities, including assessing entrances and exits, flow of traffic through the building, and parking space/accessible parking space availability
 - Not every voting location will have the same accessibility features; therefore, Staff will ensure that information on the accessibility of each voting location is made available in order for residents to make an informed decision about where to vote
 - If voters require assistance with marking the ballot due to language, literacy, or physical challenges, they may bring a

family member or trusted person to assist them. Individuals providing assistance will be required to sign a declaration

- Each voting location will include a designated parking stall for curbside voting, allowing voters to cast their ballot without leaving their vehicle
- Mail ballot voting packages will be available through Legislative Services allowing voters to cast their ballot by mail instead of in person
- Information regarding the election will be made available in a variety of mediums, such as the City's website, social media, and newspaper advertisements
- Residents may register with Elections BC by 2026-AUG-18 to be included on the provincial voters list. Advanced registration helps streamline the voting process

Councillor Armstrong joined the meeting electronically at 4:24 p.m.

- If an elector previously registered and appears on the voters list, identification is not required when voting per Provincial legislation; however, electors who wish to register or update their information on General Voting Day must provide acceptable documentation

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The City does not provide special voting opportunities; however, long-term care facilities have previously taken advantage of mail ballot voting, which allows the voters more time to complete their ballots
- A suggestion to consider seating for lineups at voting locations to assist those who have difficulty standing for long periods
- Many long-term care facilities offer transportation for residents to attend voting locations
- The importance of using plain language in election materials while ensuring compliance with legislated requirements
- A suggestion to have a voting location at or near Vancouver Island University to encourage young people to vote

(b) Accessible Beach Access Update

Introduced by C. Davis, Deputy Director, Parks and Natural Areas.

Presentation:

1. K. MacDonald, Manager, Parks Operations, provided an on-screen presentation included in the agenda package. Highlights included:
 - The Mobi-mat program launched in 2022 and is considered successful, with growing demand for more locations
 - The mats are stable, low-impact, made from recycled materials, easy to store, reasonably priced, and available in various colours
 - The City currently has five Mobi-mat (mat) locations (two saltwater and three freshwater)
 - Weekly maintenance includes sweeping, clearing debris, and checking for wear or surface erosion
 - Since September 2024, the mats have stayed out year-round. Winter storms, tides, and debris are causing rougher surfaces and faster wear, especially where mats sit in seawater
 - Staff requested input regarding leaving the mats out year-round, maintenance frequency, the potential for additional mat locations, and alternative designs

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The potential to have community groups take responsibility for maintenance of the mats, and the potential to expand the Park Ambassador Program to include the mats
- The potential to roll up the mats at saltwater locations during peak times of coastal flooding in order to lessen the impact on the mats
- A suggestion to consider the interior of the Piper's Lagoon as a future mat location during winter
- The potential use of railings to protect the mats from large logs would require additional research to determine environmental permitting requirements
- Mats with higher levels of wear may indicate a higher demand which may require a more permanent solution
- The importance for a wheelchair user to have something to hold onto when getting back into their chair
- The potential need for an additional maintenance visit per week at high-use locations

(c) Trail Grading System - Pilot Program at Westwood Lake Park

Introduced by C. Davis, Deputy Director, Parks and Natural Areas.

Presentation:

1. P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner, provided an on-screen presentation included in the agenda package. Highlights included:
 - The purpose of the Trail Grading System Pilot Program is to provide detailed, accessible and accurate information on what trail users can expect in order for users to make informed decisions
 - The proposed trail grading system includes three zones that are each assigned a colour with a list of expectations
 - Each section of Westwood Lake Trail has been assigned a zone, and each zone is expected to have a set of icons to display trail conditions
 - The goal is to expand the program in the future to include other parks and trails

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The vision to have signage at the trailhead as well as throughout the trail to indicate zone changes
- The importance of including the approximate trail width on signage for wheelchair users
- A suggestion to consider depicting wheelchair use in the icons or removing people from icons when possible, for inclusivity
- The wide range of limitations individuals may have makes it difficult to objectively define zones
- A suggestion to consider high contrast, large fonts, and red-green colour vision deficiency when designing the signs
- The importance of having a sufficient turn radius at zone changes in order to allow people to turn around
- Potentially defining zones based on compliance with accessibility standards rather than indicating areas that do not meet those standards
- Most of Westwood Lake Trail does not meet accessibility standards
- The potential to include slope grade percentages for wheelchair users

5. REPORTS:

(a) Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness 2025 Annual Report

C. Davis, Deputy Director, Parks and Natural Areas, provided an overview of the report included in then agenda package, and acknowledged the spectrum of initiatives and projects on which the Committee provided valuable input.

Councillor Armstrong disconnected from the meeting at 5:19 p.m.

C. Davis, Deputy Director, Parks and Natural Areas, noted that there is an upcoming Special ACAI Meeting on 2026-FEB-18 in order for Staff to receive feedback regarding the amenity building at Maffeo Sutton Park.

It was moved and seconded that the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness recommend that Council review and accept the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness 2025 Annual Report. The motion carried unanimously.

(b) Transportation 2026 Work Plan

J. Rose, Manager, Transportation, provided an overview of the report included in the agenda package. Highlights included:

- A request that the Committee advise if they would like additional information regarding any of the Transportation 2026 Work Plan projects

T. Brzovic, Member, disconnected from the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

- Staff applied a strict approach to identifying accessible routes in the “Car-Free Access to Daily Needs Assessment” to ensure an accurate representation of the current state of accessibility in the City
- During the 2026-DEC-08 Special Council Meeting, Council reallocated funds from the E&N Lighting Project to the Active Transportation Unallocated budget

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The potential for developers to work with the Transportation Department to improve safe road crossings as major new housing projects move forward, as well as the need to align with existing community visions and avoid creating isolated developments far from walkable, bikeable, transit-friendly corridors

- The importance of including childcare in the definition of daily needs in the “Car-Free Access to Daily Needs Assessment”

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Update re: Rental Tenant Relocation Assistance Project

K. Mayes, Planner, provided an update regarding the Rental Tenant Relocation Assistance Project, advising that a website was launched on the Get Involved Nanaimo site for the project. A renters survey will be available both online and in person at several recreation facilities and the Service and Resource Centre from 2026-JAN-28 to 2026-FEB-18. The project is anticipated to be presented to the Governance and Priorities Committee in May 2026.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:45 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER