

Accessibility Advisory Committee

MINUTES

Wednesday, October 25, 2023, 5:30 p.m.
Open to public attendance in Committee Room G
Lower Level, City Hall
Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	Chair
Karen Basran	Human Resources Business Partner
Taryn Bruckshaw	Committee Member
Iris Cheng*	Committee Member
Shannon Dolton*	Committee Member
Hazel Fitzpatrick*	Committee Member
Nancy Kato	Committee Member
Vic Leach	Committee Member
Julia Schoennagel	Committee Member

REGRETS:

Anne Bélanger	Committee Member
Karla Olson	Committee Member

GUESTS:

Drew Ferrari	TransLink
Adam Lougheed	TransLink

STAFF PRESENT:

Mike Anderson	Manager of Transportation, Engineering
Hailey Finnigan	Communications Coordinator, Office of the CAO
Chris Koth	Manager of Programs and Community Development, Library
Erica Mark	Recreation Services and Facilities Manager, Parks and Recreation
Anur Mehdic	Social Planner, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Councillor McEvoy opened the meeting at 5:35 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS**

A round of introductions took place.

3. **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

New Business Item 6.2 – Parking by Julia Schoennagel, Committee Member.

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

4.1 **August 23, 2023**

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minutes of the August 23, 2023 Accessibility Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

Carried.

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

5. **REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

5.1 **TransLink: Burrard Peninsula Area Transportation Plan**

Drew Ferrari and Adam Lougheed of TransLink, shared a PowerPoint Presentation regarding the Burrard Peninsula Area Transportation Plan (the “Plan”).

In response to questions from the Committee, Messrs. Ferrari and Lougheed provided the following comments:

- Approximately 2,800 surveys have been completed so far and there are hardcopies available for those that are unable to complete it online;
- There is no single definition of affordability and the fare structure is outside the scope of the Plan and more of a conversation to have with senior levels of government;

- It is recognized that affordability is an important aspect of accessibility;
- Currently, free transit is offered to youth 12 and under and increasing the age to 18 and under is being considered;
- TransLink faces the same affordability issues that other service providers face such as the cost of fuel and road infrastructure;
- Revenues from gas taxes will be going down with more people using electric vehicles;
- A focus area of the analysis will look at areas where affordability is an issue;
- Consideration will be given to those that use a greater proportion of their income on transportation and the areas in which they reside so that consideration can be given to providing better services in those areas;
- The survey will identify top priorities which will be put into investment plans and funding requests;
- While HandyDART is regional and not a direct part of this Plan, feedback received regarding the service will be shared with the Access Planning Team;
- Accessible washrooms is something that TransLink has been discussing for a long time and there are at least two studies currently underway to address this; however, the challenge is finding someone to operate and maintain each washroom as they are in the public realm. Previously agreements have been struck with retail outlets to provide this service but that is not possible at every place;
- Station planning includes space for washrooms which are usually pre-plumbed;
- Previous area transportation plans would have only invested in the busiest bus stops; however, with all the new policies and tools available for feedback, investments can be prioritized according to where people who use transit live;
- Is it anticipated that washroom accessibility will be a top interest expressed in this survey;
- Advertising for the survey has been shared at all SkyTrain stations, through social media, in the TransLink newsletter which has 175,000 subscribers, as well as other channels of outreach;
- Social media is used as a way to get information to younger people;

- A roundtable was held with stakeholders including those in the trucking industry, HUB Cycling, and essentially anyone who uses roads;
- Transport 2025, the region's 30-year transportation strategy, was recently adopted and contains a lot of content related to safety, including late night bus service, especially in areas where there are not a lot of other transportation options and where riders can request to disembark from a bus in places along their route other than at a bus stop;
- Safety measures on transit includes people being able to text 87.77.77 to contact Transit Police if they have concerns about something happening on the bus they are riding, or by pressing one of the yellow strips located in each SkyTrain car which will result in security meeting them at the next bus or SkyTrain stop;
- Other safety measures being taken include the hiring of approximately 20 additional Community Safety Officers;
- The survey includes a map function that allows participants to identify intersections or areas of the bike network where they do not feel safe;
- TransLink has very robust data sources, including collision data from the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, which are used by the research and analytics team;
- More analysis is being done with respect to equity than has been done with previous Plans;
- Bus shelters are the purview of each municipality; however, TransLink works with municipalities with respect to shelters, some of which are funded through advertising agreements;
- TransLink has some understanding of areas that are unsafe for pedestrians and, if a lot of people indicate that crossing a major road is not safe, that would help prioritize change in that area;
- Wi-Fi is being rolled out throughout the system and is currently available on the new rapid buses, the double-decker buses, and most of the SkyTrain route;
- Stations names are typically based on the geographical location of the station, rather than a person.

Discussion ensued and Committee members provided the following comments:

- Calling it the Burrard Peninsula Area Transportation plan may be confusing for some and make them less inclined to complete the survey;
- Affordability is an issue, especially for seniors and those with disabilities who may be on a fixed income;
- Washroom accessibility is a huge consideration for some people who wish to use transit;
- A higher density of service should be provided in hilly areas of New Westminister as many find it difficult to navigate the hills, particularly those with disabilities;
- Work that the city is doing with respect to the 22nd Street Station re-visioning such as safety and washroom accessibility may align with TransLink priorities and should be considered;
- Maintenance must be an ongoing priority and include repainting of the yellow lines so that they remain visible and keeping elevators and escalators in working order;
- Ensure that riders on both the SkyTrain and buses can see which stop is upcoming regardless of where they are sitting, including those sitting in the rear section of articulator buses;
- The audible announcements on the SkyTrain must be more clear;
- Bus stops must be better managed and those that are located outside a medical building, hospital, or the temple located on Wood Street and used by a lot of elderly or disabled people should have seats and shelter from the weather. There is a need for system leadership and a set of standards in this area;
- Washrooms are a huge issue, including at the 22nd Street Station and the SeaBus Terminal where elderly people often have to sit at a major stop without washroom facilities;
- In order to maintain transportation during snow events, snow tires should be put on the major route buses that people rely on as this can really affect those with mobility issues in particular;
- While most drivers seem naturally attuned to when a passenger is trying to sit down on their bus, all drivers must be trained to ensure that those with mobility issues are sitting prior to starting and stopping the bus;

- Most information is still only provided in English; however, statistics are available that keep track of the languages spoken in any given area and this should information should be utilized by TransLink;
- Crosswalk standards, including walking times, need to be the same across all municipalities and allow people of all abilities to cross the street safely when going to or coming off of a bus;
- Stations and stops with similar names can be confusing; and,
- The City's previous accessibility committee, the Access Ability Advisory Committee, addressed the lack of washrooms at the SeaBus Terminal and this issue has still not been resolved. The current washroom is too far away, especially for those with mobility issues

Procedural note: The Committee took a break from 6:55 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Recruitment

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, reminded Committee members that recruitment for City Advisory Committees ends on October 31, 2023 and encourage members whose terms are expiring to apply for any committee that they may be interested in sitting on.

6.2 Parking

Julia Schoennagel, Committee Member, voiced concern regarding the accessible parking on Tenth Street, next to Columbia Square, noting that the parking is now limited to one hour which is not a long enough time for someone who may have an appointment in the area and experience difficulty exiting and entering their vehicles. She advised that a time limit of at least two hours would be much more user friendly.

In addition, Ms. Schoennagel advised that, while there are not enough accessible parking spaces in the City in general, there is only one accessibly parking spot in front of City Hall, near the entrance to the City's accessible meeting rooms.

Ms. Schoennagel requested that the Committee revisit accessible parking at some point in the future.

In response, Councillor McEvoy advised that he would follow up with Mike Anderson, Manager of Transportation, regarding the issues brought forward by Ms. Schoennagel.

Discussion ensued about See Click Fix, a city app that allows people to report and track non-emergency maintenance issues. Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk will send the link to See Click Fix to Committee members in the meeting follow up email.

Councillor McEvoy shared that a discussion has taken place regarding accessibility and the City's capital budget and noted that more discussions would take place in 2024.

7. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 7:12 p.m.

8. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

November 22, 2023

Certified correct,

Original Signed
Councillor Jaimie McEvoy

Original Signed
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk