



SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

OCTOBER 21, 2024

HELD AT THE GIBSONS COMMUNITY CENTRE AT 700 PARK ROAD AND VIA ZOOM

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:	Chair	W. Conway
		R. Kiewirz
		B. Straw
		S. Tompkins
		E. Eaton
		A. Lattanzi
		A. Gursche
NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:		Melyssa Verhoeven (Youth rep)
	Councillor, TOG	D. Croal
REGRETS:	Member	L. Forrest
	Member	D. Dutto
	Member	K. Cramer
	Councillor, DOS	A. Toth
	Director, SCRD	J. Gabias
	Corporate Officer, TOG	R. Anderson
STAFF:	Staff, TOG	K. Thomas
	Staff DOS	M. Stjepovic
	Staff SCRD	R. Porte
	Recorder	L. Evanson

CALL TO ORDER Bill Conway, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and acknowledged traditional lands of the Squamish Nation, sharing his gratitude.

INTRODUCTIONS A round table of introductions was completed by those present in person and via Zoom. It was noted that committee member, Klara Cramer, resigned from the committee via email prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

Recommendation No. 1

Moved/Seconded

THAT the agenda be amended to add two items. Firstly, to discuss the replacement of our resigned committee member, and secondly, to discuss establishing working groups.

AND THAT the October 21, 2024 agenda of the Accessibility Advisory Committee be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Recommendation No. 2

Moved/Seconded

THAT the September 23, 2024 Sunshine Coast Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting minutes be approved.

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

Where are we in the process?

Town of Gibsons Planner, Katie Thomas, provided a brief history of the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee's work to date. She advised this is our 3rd Regional meeting. Our goal is to create a Regional Accessibility Plan and Vision. Today we will be looking at current barriers on the Sunshine Coast.

A spreadsheet has already been created and will be actively added to and managed by Rebecca Porte. Barriers can be added by emailing them to legislative@scrd.ca. Each local government is to complete an Environmental Scan, which will be shared with the committee at a subsequent meeting.

The committee openly discussed some barriers currently in mind. These items include:

- Infrastructure and Public Facilities need to be barrier free for one and all up front, not an after thought; universal design
- Providing training and education within local government departments. For example, the Rick Hansen foundation
- Having an accessibility lens within plans
- Building codes and Bylaws should be aligned between jurisdictions

Public Engagement

The Committee discussed ways to receive public engagement. It's important to voice your real-life barriers and every opportunity should be taken to do so.

The following items were suggested:

- 'Let's Talk' page – Could send out a newsletter sharing this page for local accessibility barriers. Could share the committee background, timelines and an engagement section with a survey, map or questions. Our plan is required to have an ongoing feedback mechanism.
- Signs and posters at notice boards and in schools with a QR code to access 'Let's Talk' to voice personal barriers on the Sunshine Coast
- Could have a platform that allows to upload photos of the specific barrier: MAP- "Map Accessibility Photos"

Grant Applications

The committee discussed different grant applications that may be available. These include SPARC; an Accessibility Awareness Day event, Rick Hansen Accessibility education training, BC Vision 0; Road safety grant application and Disability Alliance of BC (DABC); \$3500 available for each jurisdiction. The previously applied for Age Friendly grant was unsuccessful.

Replacement Accessibility Advisory Committee member

Klara Cramer advised the committee of her resignation prior to today's meeting. Katie Thomas advised the committee is still within the allowable number of members, but we can advertise for another. Bill Conway asked that a letter is sent to Klara from the committee thanking her for her input and participation thus far.

Breakout Session – Accessibility barriers and opportunities on the Sunshine Coast

The Committee broke out into two groups to discuss current barriers being faced by them on the Sunshine Coast:

- Wider sidewalks and improved orientation. These same concerns were noted in 2008 and are still present today
- Crosswalks where needed

- Barrier free aspects upfront, not an after thought/retrofit
- Training and education within local government
- Honorariums for enlightening barriers on a case-by-case basis
- Accessibility lens within our local governments
- Loss of employment – many places are inaccessible with stairs and no accommodation to work from home.
- BC building codes and bylaws to include accessibility. Update CSA standards to ensure accessibility
- Bylaws limiting ‘home based businesses’ discriminate against those unable to leave the house to go to work
- Coastal ride share; need accessible van on weekends, not party van
- Advocate for better Handydart service. Only operate from 9-4 on weekdays with no dispatch system. Subscribed users get priority. Taxi-saver program provides discounted taxi rides up to \$80.00 per month but does not help those in economic distress.
- Accessibility parking should always come with curb cut
- BC Ferries and wheelchairs; staff training on loading, ships designed with accessibility lens, no transportation via HandyDart to the ferry terminal
- Accessible pedestrian signals (APS) at every light. Only 1 in 7 lights in Gibsons has an APS system
- Are there plans in place to aid in the evacuation of people with disabilities during an emergency event? Are evacuation facilities on the coast accessible?
- Yellow painted curbs and steps; need to be maintained
- Both Sunshine Coast theatres are not accessible. Must sit sideways or in aisle
- Trails need to be maintained so they can be accessed by all. Expand list of accessible trails
- Inglis trail is too steep and dangerous
- Hough Rd trail is filled with roots, hard to navigate
- Cannot access the crosswalk buttons at Pratt Rd and Hwy 101
- Gibsons Community Centre; Tsunami Hockey; removed handicap spaces and hard to access event tickets
- Hockey Arena: When ice is removed, there’s a ramp used for access. Both arenas share a ramp, so the space isn’t always accessible
- Elphinstone school elevator is old and scary and requires a staff key to use
- Elphinstone school wheelchair button on door doesn’t consistently work
- All along the highway, the shoulder is narrow or nonexistent. Should have a sidewalk for pedestrians
- Advocate for TRAC and trail builders
- Sprockids trail: yellow barricade blocks out wheelchair access

- When barriers are mentioned, those complainants feel like villains. Would be nice to have support when requesting improvements, strength in numbers. Break this attitudinal behaviour
- Could come up with events to showcase how it feels to have to navigate communities' current barriers
- Sharing a list of accessibility guidelines to share with builders and developers
- Having a list of accessible housing units available to rent or purchase
- Sunshine Coast resource centre; advocate for more advocates. Only 1 on the coast with a huge case load
- Advocate for funding for local grants to retrofit accessibility improvements to personal property to enable people to stay in their homes
- Local government services and meetings aren't accessible. No closed captioning or hearing loops at Council meetings or at the front counter (TOG and SCRD)
- Town of Gibsons parking lot is inaccessible to Handydart
- Ensure all local government services are available online or by phone not requiring an in person visit
- Train staff to provide as much information over the phone as possible

Working Groups

The Committee discussed working groups going forward. The working groups will come up with recommendations and ideas to bring forward to the Committee.

- Awareness Day event– Lynne Forrest, Ellen Eaton, Rose Kiewitz, Sarah Tompkins, Marina Stjepovic and Councillor Croal
- Emergency Response Plan – The Sunshine Coast Regional District has an emergency response representative. This representative should be invited to a subsequent meeting to present
- Transportation – Ellen Eaton, Bill Conway, Anna Lattanzi, Angie Gursche. To have a future discussion with Rob Ringa from BC Transit

It was discussed that a Representative from Emergency Response to be invited to the next meeting. The working groups will not meet prior to our next Committee meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Recommendation No. 3

Moved/Seconded

THAT the next Sunshine Coast Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be hosted by the SCRD and be held during the first week of December depending on HandyDart availability.

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

Recommendation No. 4

Moved/Seconded

THAT the October 21, 2024, Sunshine Coast Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be adjourned at 12:08 pm.

CARRIED