

Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee

Report of Activities 2019/2020

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1.0 Priorities, Accomplishments, and Future Goals

1.1 Priority and Accomplishment – COVID-19 Response

PDAC’s last official in-person clerked meeting was held on March 12, 2020 although the minutes will show that quorum was not achieved due to the pandemic. Several of our members had already been advised to stay home to reduce their risk of potential exposure to the virus. Only days after, most of the City’s facilities and workplaces shut down on the advice of the Federal and Provincial governments. Over the next few months, PDAC showed leadership in their ability to pivot immediately by continuing to have working group and a few subcommittee meetings via Zoom, until City Hall officially started giving staff support back to the advisory committees. During this time, the leadership team ensured that their individual advisory members were properly sheltering in place, had the necessary access to food, medication, and home-support workers if required. Information was shared about what was happening amongst the persons with disabilities community around the city. Some members reached out to share information that was not readily available. One member compiled a list of all the local food delivery

services and other important information regarding COVID-19 and distributed this to the rest of PDAC, SAC and a few other community groups. By April, City Staff were able to hold a meeting about COVID-19 with members of PDAC. Members of PDAC were able to voice their opinions and provide advice to the City's response to COVID-19. Tasia Alexis (Developmental Disabilities Association) and Paul Gauthier (Individualized Funding Resources Centre Society) were able to voice their concerns around the lack of PPE and the situation that was happening with home support services. After the first meeting about COVID-19 in April, PDAC continued to meet with City Staff online to discuss the COVID-19 response. The leadership team also met with City Staff and members of the Food Policy Council to discuss potential communications outreach developed by the Food Policy Council, highlighting the needs of persons with disabilities and seniors during this difficult time. PDAC will continue to be readily available to members of City Staff to discuss the COVID-19 response and about the accessibility requirements of the City's residents as more facilities and services reopen.

1.2 Priority and Accomplishment – Reopening of Stanley Park

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, motor vehicle access to Stanley Park was restricted as of early April 2020, which eliminated access to the park for those who require vehicle use to overcome their mobility challenges. As pandemic restrictions eased in May 2020, there was no corresponding return of accessibility rights of seniors and persons with disabilities to enter and utilize all parts of the park. Existing accessible parking within the park was also diminished or removed entirely. PDAC and the Accessible City Subcommittee maintained a hard line on these issues to eventually convince the Park Board that such accessibility rights are entrenched within the BC Human Rights Code and must be adhered to throughout all parts of any city park, including restricted accessible parking along Beach Avenue, whenever alteration to traffic flow and/or the addition of bike lanes are being contemplated.

1.3 Priority and Accomplishment – Naming of Jeanette (Andersen) Street

The naming of an internal street after Jeanette Andersen has been on the table multiple times. PDAC members made a strong case to name a street at the George Pearson Centre redevelopment, after this important individual who made a significant difference to the lives of many people with disabilities in Vancouver and across the province. Ms. Andersen really led by example by demonstrating that people living with disabilities can lead a meaningful and independent life within a greater community. The closing of this institution bears witness to her hard work and advocacy. Project leads Paul Gauthier and Tasia Alexis as well as the leadership team participated in a joint meeting with members of the Civic Asset Naming Committee in 2020 to help further the cause of naming a street after Ms. Anderson. A motion, seeking confirmation of this initiative, has gone forward and is pending a final decision by the City of Vancouver council and we are looking forward to a positive outcome.

1.4 Accomplishment – Accessible Straws

In 2019, PDAC continued with their work in advocating for persons with disabilities and those with accessibility challenges with the City Staff who were working on the Single-Use Item Deduction Strategy. As a result of these consultations, PDAC members were able to demonstrate why flexible plastic straws are a necessity for persons with disabilities to be able to participate fully when frequenting restaurants, bars, and cafes. City Staff recommended in their report that providing flexible plastic straws individually wrapped in paper to those with accessibility challenges should be incorporated into the Vancouver Bylaws by April 2020. The final report was made in November 2019 and co-chair Laura Mackenrot

represented PDAC on this issue. PDAC is proud that the City of Vancouver passed the new bylaw on that day.

In 2020, the Federal government made an announcement to reduce/eliminate single-use plastics such as plastic straws. The Accessible City Subcommittee and PDAC provided its feedback and helped draft the municipal response to the Federal government regarding its plan to reduce plastic pollution by 2030. PDAC has been invited by the Federal government staff to a meeting to be held in January 2021 to discuss this issue.

1.5 Accomplishment – Facility Audits and Recommendations

In 2019, members of PDAC and SAC volunteered their time during the break between terms and met with Facilities staff to complete accessibility audits for the civic theatres as well as for numerous community centres and libraries. After the completion of these audits and meetings with PDAC, the consultant and staff created a report which highlighted the priorities of work to be completed. This report demonstrated over 1600 proposed changes and modifications. This report will help make it easier for facility staff to decide which projects to tackle within their budget constraints.

1.6 Future Goal – Inclusion of Accessible Path in Housing Bylaws

PDAC has long fought for the inclusion of bylaws that would require an accessible path from the street to at least one entrance in new housing builds. In 2013, new housing bylaws with increased accessibility features were passed by Council with the agreements with PDAC and SAC that a report detailing how an accessible path into homes would be created within 18 months. In 2018, the staff report finally went to council without the support of PDAC, who sent 6 members and other individuals to speak against accepting the report. Council voted against the motion and did not accept the report. Efforts have been made to get back on track with this initiative. The Housing Subcommittee is developing an informational document that can be utilized consistently by all members. The subcommittee members are working to research and increase knowledge with all aspects of this issue to impart information accurately and succinctly. The subcommittee is looking forward to re-establishing the relationship with City Staff to determine the status of the Accessible Path and to help move this initiative forward in a timely manner.

1.7 Future Goal – Increasing the Accessibility of our Parks and Plazas

PDAC looks forward to timely and fulsome consultations pertaining to any City or Park Board initiatives which may impact the accessibility for persons with disabilities of parks and plazas. These consultations are necessary to ensure that all potential accessibility concerns arising from any such proposed initiatives are identified and carefully considered at an early stage.

1.8 Future Goal – ML Broadway Extension: Washrooms & Elevators

Acknowledging TransLink's commitment to make bathrooms available on its system and knowing that bathroom access is a vital need for many individuals with disabilities, the Transportation Subcommittee drafted a motion that the City ask that there be accessible bathrooms made accessible on day one at

every station of the Broadway Extension line. Along with bathrooms, the motion also noted the need for multiple elevators at the stations, highlighting how important station access is to persons with mobility needs. The motion was passed by PDAC in January 2020. Following the passing of the motion, the subcommittee drafted the letter to the Translink CEO, explaining the importance of multiple elevators and access to bathrooms at all stations of the Broadway Extension line for transit users who are disabled. The letter asked them to take the opportunity in the planning stages to make steps to address these issues. PDAC continues to monitor the situation and will work hard in making sure that the Broadway Extension Line is as accessible as possible.

2.0 Accessible City Subcommittee Report of Activities

PDAC Members: Alfiya Battalova (Chair), Peter Brown, Laura Mackenrot, Michael Frazer (since April 2020), Tasia Alexis (until March 2020).

External Members: Jacques Courteau (previous PDAC member/co-chair).

The Accessible City Subcommittee deals mainly with the built environment of the City of Vancouver. It works to improve the accessibility of buildings, facilities, parks, and general City works and initiatives. These were the main outstanding issues from the previous term.

2.1 Downtown Public Space Strategy

The subcommittee worked closely with the staff to ensure the strategy includes considerations of universal design as well as addressed issues around social isolation of seniors and people with disabilities. The strategy was approved by City Council in 2020.

2.2 Accessible Playgrounds

The subcommittee was involved in ensuring the Charleson Park Playground meets the accessibility needs of not only children with disabilities but also parents with disabilities. The playground's renovation was completed in November of 2020.

2.3 Oakridge Civic Centre

The subcommittee has been involved in the discussions that focus on the Oakridge Centre redevelopment. The subcommittee provided a detailed feedback related to the civic center's indoor and outdoor accessibility.

2.4 Richards Green Complete Street

The subcommittee is involved in providing input to the project that focuses on sidewalk repairs, construction of bidirectional protected bike lanes, planting of new trees, incorporating a new electric vehicle charging stations.

2.5 10th Ave. - Planning for Phase 2 Construction

The area is a home to several health facilities, including, but not limited to, BC Cancer, VGH, the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre, the Arthritis Centre, and the Eye Care Centre. As such, it plays an important role for people with a range of health conditions, including people with disabilities. The subcommittee has been actively involved in these consultations.

2.6 Mobility and Public Life Responses

The subcommittee has been involved in the discussion about street space reallocation (e.g., slow streets, pop-up plazas) because of COVID-19.

2.7 Document Accessibility - City's Zoning & Development Bylaw

The subcommittee provided feedback on the development of the Zoning and Development By-laws in accessible formats. The staff was very responsive in making sure the documents are fully accessible to people with different types of disabilities.

2.8 Accessible Parking

The subcommittee received an update on the survey among SPARC placard holders about the accessible parking needs. The subcommittee will continue engaging on this topic given the importance of accessible parking for equitable access for people with disabilities.

2.9 CRAB Park

The members of the subcommittee emphasized the importance of making this park more accessible. As one of the parks that is prioritized for renovation, it will continue working on this issue as it evolves.

2.10 Parks Washroom Strategy

The subcommittee has continued working on this issue and has insisted on the importance of accessible public washrooms. Parks Washroom Strategy was approved by Vancouver Park Board in 2020.

2.11 East Park

The subcommittee was involved in the initial consultation which introduced the creation of East Park that will be in the False Creek area. The subcommittee will continue working on this issue as it evolves.

3.0 Housing Subcommittee Report of Activities

PDAC Members: Paul Gauthier (Co-Chair), Jane Vorbrodt (Co-Chair), Tasia Alexis, Laura Mackenrot, Jill Weiss

External Members: Chris Hofley, Tom Parker

2020 was a challenging year and as we faced uncertain times around the COVID-19 Pandemic, the PDAC Housing Subcommittee took a hiatus in 2020 from normal activities. This allowed us to follow the recommendations of the Provincial Health Officer around social distancing, and for each of us to focus upon personal matters, as individuals, as they related to the Pandemic. As the year ended, we were re-energized with a plan to move forward with renewed enthusiasm for our objectives with meetings and a workplan towards goals for early 2021.

3.1 Vancouver Building Bylaw

An update of the Vancouver Building Bylaw was issued without consultation with PDAC. The Housing Subcommittee is hoping to establish a stronger connection to City Staff regarding code development and seeks opportunity for consultation. Members of the subcommittee will review the new Vancouver Building Bylaw to determine if any adaptability or accessible measures were changed. Collaborative protocols should be included in the Accessible City Strategy.

3.2 Municipality Strategy

There is interest in forming a union of PDAC-like organizations across BC Municipalities to discuss common issues as they relate to accessible housing. The City of Vancouver is in a good position to take leadership on this.

3.3 City of Vancouver Urban Design Panel

The Housing Subcommittee is developing the parameters for a role on the City of Vancouver Urban Design Panel with the exclusive purpose of reviewing incoming proposals through the lens of accessibility and inclusivity. With a motion in the works, additional research is required. There are plans for the Housing Subcommittee to follow up with the City Planning staff to ensure that the Subcommittee is involved in the early stages of large parcel development. Early involvement will add a much-needed voice for persons with disabilities to prevent plans from moving too far forward that overlook the critical need for accessible housing. Other municipalities (e.g., City of Surrey, City of Richmond) have representatives from the disability community on their advisory design panels and the City of Vancouver needs to follow suit.

3.4 Accessible Units

A current inventory of accessible units needs to be made available in addition to outstanding requests and how many have requests been reviewed and are in process. There needs to be statistics indicating how long the process is taking and how many accessible units are going to able bodied persons who are not in need of the accessibility features.

3.5 The Right Fit Project (RFP)

The Housing Subcommittee continues to receive updates on the RFP progress. They received our letter of support for continued funding for this program. We are pleased that Jane Vorbrodt has joined the RFP steering committee on behalf of PDAC. The project is no longer a pilot, whereas it is being funded by the City of Vancouver and Reaching Home, a Federal initiative directed at addressing homelessness in Canada. The RFP has seen great success in building relationships with housing providers, and with streamlining the approach of reviewing and documenting providers and available accessible units. Through this process, the RFP is able to successfully match housing providers with wheelchair users. The Accessibility Checklist, which was developed by our Housing Subcommittee, has become a key component in understanding housing inventory in Vancouver.

3.6 Pearson Dogwood Redevelopment

Jane Vorbrodt and Chris Hofley joined the Pearson Redevelopment Committee, which is a partnership between Vancouver Coastal Health, the Disability Alliance, Pearson Resident Council, and the City of Vancouver's PDAC. The Housing Subcommittee continues to participate in the Pearson Committee monthly to ensure that initiatives move forward.

3.7 Short Term Drop Off at Pearson Dogwood Redevelopment

There were many discussions around the need for short term drop off in front of all buildings and health care facilities in this redevelopment. For HandyDART passengers, it is a requirement for the driver to have a direct line of sight to the front entrance. This has now been resolved and the subcommittee appreciates the work the City of Vancouver staff put towards this issue.

4.0 Social Inclusion Subcommittee Report of Activities

PDAC Members: Tasia Alexis (Chair), Caitlin Anderson, Alfiya Battalova, Leslie Benisz, Michelle Chakraborti, Laura Mackenrot

External Members: Jacques Courteau (previous PDAC member/co-chair).

4.1 Info and Consultations

Priorities including diversity, equity and inclusion were discussed and many workshops and consultations were attended by both the Chair and a few of its members. The below is a list of just some of the consultations and workshops that were attended:

- CoV Gender Variant and Two-Spirit Inclusion Training: June 2019 Broadway Plan: Envisioning the Future of Transportation Workshop: July 2019.
- Vancouver Awards of Excellence, 5 award activities for youth, adults, and organizations: July 2019.
- #VanBudget 2020 Community Stakeholder Workshop on Budget Priorities: September 2019.
- Enabling Democracy by Elections Canada, Supporting People with Disabilities to Vote - Collaborative Lab with Elections Canada Community Relations Officer: September 2019.
- UBC Enabling Democracy, Learning Part 3 - Presented by Andrea Reimer: October 2019.
- Vancouver City Planning Commission, The City We Want, The City We Need Co-design Workshop: October 2019.
- CoV Equity Framework Presentation, Joint Advisory Committee Meeting, City Plan- Bringing together urban planning and community leaders: December 2019.
- Vancouver City Planning Commission, Civic and Advisory Joint Steering Committee - Resilient Cities: December 2019.
- Council of Councils Advisory Committees meeting, Committee Presentations of Activities and Priorities: January 2020.
- Vancouver City Planning Commission Summit Steering Committee -The City We Want Summit Meeting: January 2020.
- City of Vancouver Black History Month Celebration: January 2020.
- CoV Randomized Ballots Joint Advisory Committee -Discussion regarding the pros and cons of randomized ballots: February 2020.
- VPL Accessible Resources Presentation with VPL Liaison.
- Universal & Inclusive Design final presentation and working group: May 2020.
- Vancouver, the City we want amidst the Pandemic: June 2020.
- Home Trap -Elevators, Hosted by Disability Access (Sam Sullivan): June 2020.
- SAC Special Presentation “There is No Place Like Home”: July 2020.
- SAC Special Meeting on Stanley Park: July 2020.
- CoV Pandemic Planning Joint Advisory Committee Meeting Forum: August 2020.
- CoV Black African Diaspora Members discussing Community Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accountability Presentation: September 2020.
- Council of Councils Economic and Community Recovery Program Advisory Workshop: September 2020.
- CoV Infrastructure Strategy Engagement Forum Presentation: October 2020.
- CoV Budget 2021 Engagement Presentation: October 2020.
- CoV African Project — Diversity and Inclusion Presentation: November 2020.

4.2 Women's Day Planning Event Committee

In 2019, PDAC was given a request to have one member join the Women's Day Planning Event Committee, which was to be held on March 2, 2020. Social Inclusion Subcommittee chair, Tasia Alexis, agreed to be our representative and attended many meetings on this committee along with other members from the Senior's Advisory Committee and Women's Advisory Committee. Co-chair Laura Mackenrot was formally requested to speak during the event. She presented two poems highlighting the effect of social isolation due to the lack of accessibility in the built environment on children with disabilities. She ended her presentation with a request to change makers to help be part of the solution on these issues.

5.0 Transportation Subcommittee Report of Activities

PDAC Members: Caitlin Anderson (Chair), Laura Mackenrot, Tasia Alexis (until February 2020), Jill Weiss (until April 2020)

SAC Liaison: Dellie Lidyard

Accessible Transportation is an area of significant importance. The ability to move freely around the city enables persons with disabilities to attend school, social events, medical appointments, or work. Accessing these facets of society is critical to decreasing existing barriers to social inclusion and to upward mobility facing this at-risk group. The Transportation Subcommittee worked tirelessly on a diverse range of issues concerning mobility in the City of Vancouver.

5.1 10th Ave Evaluation Committee

The committee continued to have members involved in the 10th Avenue Evaluation committee. The Hospital zone is an area where there will be a lot of interactions by people with disabilities, which is why participation in this project was so key - providing feedback both through meetings and in person evaluations to provide the planning department key information on what was successful and what needs improvement.

5.2 Rail-Volution 2019

The chair was asked to speak at a mobile workshop on Sept. 10, 2019, co-led by the City and Translink, on the importance of stakeholder feedback in the process of designing equitable and accessible spaces. Other members attended the Forum throughout the week.

5.3 Ride Hailing Motion

Consulted with City of Vancouver Business Planning and Project Support team on the changing BC legislation around passenger directed services. Drafted a motion asking the City to request the BC government to require safety training for all drivers and a commitment by the BC government to assist

and help promote a variety of adaptations so that all users can access all passenger directed transportation modes. The motion was passed by PDAC and presented to council on Oct 2 2019 by the subcommittee chair.

5.4 Mobility Equity Workshop

Participated in the Mobility Equity Workshop hosted by Transportation and Street Activities branches on November 26, 2019. The workshop was put in place to allow stakeholders to provide feedback on the Granville Bridge update.

5.5 Access Transit Meeting

In November 2019, representatives from the TransLink Access Transit Department (ATD) met with members of the Transportation Subcommittee to discuss HandyDART's future and areas of concern. The topics of Compass Pass, changing demographics, financing and the thought of changing registration requirements were discussed.

5.6 HandyDART Registration Motion

Following the above-mentioned meeting of November 2019, the Transportation Subcommittee drafted a motion making it clear that PDAC was against in-person interviews for HandyDART registration, as it has been shown to negatively impact users, creating another obstacle to use. The motion was passed in January 2020. Shortly after, the Subcommittee wrote a letter to the CEO of TransLink, explaining PDAC's concerns with the plans for in-person registration and why PDAC was against it.

5.7 Motion to Local Government Associations

The Transportation Subcommittee and PDAC advised Councillors Fry and Wiebe on their motions to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association and the Union of BC Municipalities concerning the Accessibility Funding & Accessibility Guarantee Strategy for all Passenger Directed Vehicle fleets. This motion requested the Province to guarantee a portion of a fleet be accessible, consultation be made with stakeholder groups and that the Accessibility Fund created by the Provincial government be committed fully to creating opportunities for making Passenger Directed Vehicle Fleets equitable to all.

5.8 Passenger Transportation Branch (PTB) Consultation

Met with the PTB in May 2020 to discuss new Provincial driver training guidelines and possible uses for the Accessibility Fund. The Subcommittee underlined the importance of having all drivers trained, as well as the need to use the Fund solely to help provide accessible options for users who want to be able to use these new transit options.

5.9 Accessible Transit Forum

Members attended a virtual forum on the Future of Accessible Transportation hosted by the Disability Foundation. The conversation asked service providers to provide opinions on the future of accessible transportation options in BC.

5.10 Future Considerations

As COVID-19 hit the transportation sector hard, we continued our advocacy online. Having subcommittee members on TransLink User's Advisory Committee (UAC) and TransLink's HandyDART User's Advisory Committee (HUAC) gave the subcommittee opportunities to bring our continued concerns to decision makers at both TransLink and the City of Vancouver. Items that continue to be on our agenda as we move forward are loss of bus lines and stops, mobility pricing, the Broadway Extension line, HandyDART, and other issues that persons with disabilities are affected by when travelling around the City of Vancouver.

6.0 Other

6.1 Vancouver Plan

Several members attended the Vancouver Plan consultations which occurred in late 2019 and 2020. The Vancouver Plan team presented PDAC in early 2020 before the pandemic closures and received advice about the proposed strategy within the plan from our members. PDAC looks forward to further consultation with the Vancouver Plan team on this strategy moving forward.

6.2 BC Framework for Accessibility Legislation

Members attended community meetings on the upcoming BC Legislation in November 2019. This legislation will touch every portion of daily living for people with disabilities. PDAC continues to receive updates from the Accessibility Secretariat, Ministry of Social Policy and Poverty Reduction as to the progress of this legislation.

6.3 Accessible Strategy Task Force

The current liaisons to the task force for this term as agreed upon in 2018 are: Tasia Alexis, Peter Brown, Anita Rudolph, and Jacques Courteau (previous PDAC member/co-chair 2017-2018).

The task force continues with the development of the Accessible City Strategy, with an aim to having a public engagement process this spring and a first draft delivered to City Council in the summer of 2021.

6.4 Senior's Advisory Committee

Tasia Alexis and Laura Mackenrot were chosen to be the official liaisons for the Senior's Advisory Committee. They attended monthly meetings of SAC both in person and then online during COVID, offering their advice in their areas of expertise.