



## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

July 4, 2024

A meeting of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, July 4, 2024, at 5:39 pm in the Joe Wai Room, Ground Floor, City Hall, and via electronic means.

**PRESENT:** Peter Brown, Chair\*  
Salina Dewar, Vice-Chair  
Tasia Alexis  
John Atoyebi  
Ana Booth  
Vikram Bubber  
Mikeal Frazer  
Tommy Leung  
Sarah van Baarsen

**ABSENT:** Adam Roper  
Avery Shannon

**ALSO PRESENT:** Laura Christensen, Park Board Liaison  
Sgt. Jim Prasobsin, Vancouver Police Board Liaison  
Jennifer Streckmann, Vancouver Public Library Liaison  
Paul Storer, Director of Transportation, Staff Liaison  
Laura Mackenrot, Former Co-Chair of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee

**CITY CLERK'S OFFICE:** Cassia Nasralla, Meeting Coordinator  
Julie Emmerson, Committee Clerk

\*Denotes absence for portion of the meeting

### WELCOME

The Vice-Chair acknowledged we are on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples. We thank them for having cared for this land and look forward to working with them in partnership as we continue to build this great city together.

### Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Tasia Alexis  
SECONDED by Ana Booth

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve the Minutes from the meeting of Thursday, May 16, 2024, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY  
(Peter Brown absent for the vote)

**1. Broadway Plan Implementation**

Staff from Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability provided a presentation and responded to questions.

**2. Working Session Updates**

The Vice-Chair provided an update on the working session held on Thursday, June 6, 2024.

**3. Liaison Updates**

The Staff Liaison, Park Board Liaison, Vancouver Public Library Liaison, and Vancouver Police Department Liaison provided updates and responded to questions.

**4. Sub-Committee Updates**

Subcommittees Chairs provided updates and informed the Committee of upcoming subcommittee meeting dates.

**5. New Business**

Members provided updates to the Committee regarding various issues in the city related to public transit accessibility.

At this point in the meeting, it was

MOVED by Peter Brown  
SECONDED by Salina Dewar

WHEREAS

1. The mandate of the City of Vancouver's Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) is to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for persons with disabilities to participate in city services and civic life;
2. In March 2024, Councillor Fry proposed a motion, which, among other items, pursued a reasonable commitment by the City to maintain or improve previous levels of accessibility, and for the city to make all efforts to prevent the loss of existing levels of accessibility;
3. The original motion of Councillor Fry was amended substantially by Councillor Meiszner, the result of which considerably diminished the proposed commitment of, and request to City Council on accessibility for persons with disabilities;

4. City Council has committed towards maintaining and enhancing the accessibility of persons with disabilities through the passage of Phase 1 of the Accessible City Strategy in July 2022. This commitment is consistent with similar commitments made through provincial and federal legislation;
5. PDAC is deeply concerned that the actions of City Council consistently do not reflect the sincerity of their commitment to the principles of accessibility for persons with disabilities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the concerns of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee be directed to City Council through the letter dated July 4, 2024, addressed to the Mayor and Council and signed by the Chair of PDAC.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

\* \* \* \* \*

*Please note, the letter referenced in the above motion is appended to these minutes.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Subsequently, it was

MOVED by Tasia Alexis  
SECONDED by Peter Brown

THAT Mikael Frazer represent the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee at the Council meeting addressing the Fire Hall Theater accessibility issue.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED by Tommy Leung  
SECONDED by John Atoyebi

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## **Next Meeting:**

DATE: Thursday, September 12, 2024  
TIME: 5:30 pm  
PLACE: Joe Wai Room, Ground Floor, City Hall  
/ WebEx Online

The Committee adjourned at 7:43 pm.

\* \* \* \* \*

VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-11

*The Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee is a volunteer civic agency appointed by Vancouver City Council to help communicate community perspectives to Council and staff while advising on City priorities, projects, and initiatives. The following represents the views of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee. The Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee is not expressing views on behalf of the City of Vancouver.*

July 8, 2024

Dear Mayor Sim and City Councillors:

The Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) wish to bring to your attention serious concerns we have with respect to the City of Vancouver's commitment to the principle of accessibility, as was previously confirmed by the City in a motion passed in July 2022. Our concerns arise from a motion which was passed by Council in March 2024, as was discussed in an article by Pippa Norman in CityNews Vancouver posted on March 13, 2024, attached in the link [here](#). The article outlines the concerns of Ms. Gabrielle Peters, a disabled writer and policy analyst, who quite rightly took exception to the motion. As noted by Ms. Peters, the motion, which was passed 8-2, contained significant amendments proposed by Councillor Meiszner from the initial motion proposed by Councillor Fry.

In short, PDAC supports the views of Ms. Peters and is troubled by the direction the Council appears to be taking on accessibility at what is the early stages of their commitment to the Accessibility Strategy and the requirements to promote and pursue accessibility outlined in both the Accessible Canada Act and the Accessible British Columbia Act.

Three specific points need to be addressed.

1. The initial motion proposed by Councillor Fry pursued a commitment by the City to make all efforts to maintain or improve previous levels of accessibility during renovations or upgrades. The initial motion also directed City Staff to amend the Accessibility Strategy to include a requirement that all efforts be made to prevent any loss of existing accessibility in any of the City's programs, services, communications, events, or spaces. Councillor Meiszner's amended motion eliminated both the proposed commitment by the City and the direction to City Staff, and simply proposed that Mayor and Council affirm the City's commitment to accessibility and the rights of persons with disabilities to take part and fully participate in an equal basis with others in the cultural life of the city.

PDAC maintains that the journey toward maintaining and enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities requires more than an affirmation toward a commitment that was already affirmed in the July 2022 motion passed by Council, accepting Phase 1

of the Accessibility Strategy. This journey will require the City to go beyond an affirmation, and proceed towards commitment by City Staff to do something towards this goal, such as making all efforts to promote and ensure the goal is achieved. It is essential that the City understand the need to keep proceeding toward this goal, even if it requires using language which will impose a responsibility that is necessarily fulfilled to ensure the end result is a success. It is worrisome when this minimum standard, which must be imposed at this early date, cannot be achieved.

It is also perplexing that the motion that was passed pursues a commitment to accessibility to allow persons with disabilities to fully participate on an equal basis with others in the cultural life of the city. What does this mean and why is it restricted to this singular aspect of city life?

2. PDAC is also very troubled by the removal from the initial motion to hold organizations working with the City to the same responsibility of preventing any loss of existing accessibility infrastructure during renovations or upgrades. Assuming, again, that the reasonable and fair request that this responsibility is limited to simply making all reasonable efforts toward this end, it is astonishing that the City would not want to ensure their accessibility goals are only to be maintained by City Staff, and can otherwise be avoided by simply contracting out of the responsibility through hiring of a third party service provider. This is not a convincing commitment towards accessibility for persons with disabilities but is rather a meager acknowledgement that can be avoided where the circumstances dictate. PDAC respectfully submits that this is a significant erosion of the commitment which we believed the City had entered into in July 2022, and which is contemplated by the federal and provincial legislature.
3. The amended motion proposes Mayor and Council continue to remove, identify, and prevent barriers to children with disabilities. Regardless of whether this particular aspect of the amended motion pertains only to the Stanley Park train, or all services, programs, and operations, the commitment to accessibility is for ALL persons with disabilities, regardless of age. The obligation does not end when a child becomes an adult, as the notion of disability is not age specific.

In order for the journey toward maintaining and enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to be successful, the City must not only talk the talk but also must walk the walk. This means that attitudes, policies, procedures all must reflect a different level of commitment toward what has been advertised as a preference towards a more diverse, inclusive, and accessible city. This also means that the City will likely not be able to “do business” as it always has but will be required to accept that changes are necessary if indeed the commitment to this goal is serious. The amended motion failed in reflecting an acceptance that things must be done differently for this initiative to succeed. PDAC respectfully requests that Council must do better in this regard, as our time commitment and expertise should not be dishonored by commitments that appear to be more illusionary than sincere.

Thank you for your attention to the above. We are always open to discussing this important issue with any of you at any time.

Sincerely,

Peter Brown  
Chair, Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee

cc: Mayor and Council  
Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Tina Penney, Director, Legislative Operations; Deputy City Clerk  
Kevin Burris, Manager, Civic Agencies