



PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 11, 2025

A meeting of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 5:46 pm, in the Joe Wai Room, Ground Floor, City Hall, and via electronic means.

PRESENT: Peter Brown, Chair
Tasia Alexis
John Atoyebi
Vikram Bubber
Salina Dewar
Madeleine Grant
Niloofar Hedayati
Avery Shannon
Casey Skinner
Sarah van Baarsen

ABSENT: Mikeal Frazer (Leave of Absence)
Tommy Leung (Leave of Absence)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Lucy Maloney, Council Liaison
Councillor Sean Orr, Council Liaison
Paul Storer, Director of Transportation, Staff Liaison
Commissioner Tom Digby, Park Board Liaison
Laura Mackenrot, Former Co-Chair, Persons with
Disabilities Advisory Committee

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Cassia Nasralla, Meeting Coordinator

WELCOME

The 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.

Leave of Absence Requests

MOVED by Tasia Alexis
SECONDED by Salina Dewar

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve leaves of absence for Mikeal Frazer and Tommy Leung for this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by John Atoyebi
SECONDED by Niloofar Hedayati

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve the minutes from the meeting of Thursday, June 12, 2025, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

1. Kingsway – Main Street Bus Priority

Staff from Engineering Services provided a presentation and responded to questions.

2. Exploring Space Efficient Egress in the Vancouver Building By-law

Staff from Development, Buildings, and Licensing, Vancouver Fire Rescue Services, and Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability provided a presentation and responded to questions.

3. Working Session Updates

None.

4. Liaison Updates

The Staff Liaison and the Park Board Liaison provided updates.

5. Subcommittee Updates

None.

6. New Business

Members from Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (introduced a new program entitled “Residents Requiring Assistance” to better assist people with disabilities in times of emergency.

Additionally, during New Business, Vice-Chair Salina Dewar presented a letter to the committee.

At this point in the meeting it was,

MOVED by Salina Dewar
SECONDED by Tasia Alexis

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee adopt the

letter dated September 8, 2025, entitled "Re: Feedback on Draft Recommendations by Elections Committee".

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Vikram Bubber absent for the vote)

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

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ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Salina Dewar
SECONDED by Sarah Van Baarsen

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Vikram Bubber absent for the vote)

Next Meeting:

DATE: Thursday, November 13, 2025
TIME: 5:30 PM
PLACE: Joe Wai Room, Ground Floor, City Hall
/ Teams Meeting

The Committee adjourned at 7:32 pm.

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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.

September 8, 2025

Natti Schmid
Elections Communications and Outreach Manager
Office of the City Clerk, City of Vancouver

Dear Natti Schmid:

RE: Feedback on Draft Recommendations by Elections Committee

The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy "reflects [the City's] commitment to support the full participation of persons with disabilities by establishing and maintaining inclusive services, programs and infrastructure, and removing barriers".

As requested by the Elections Committee, and on behalf of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC), we are providing feedback on the draft recommendations for the next election. We also raise some important issues for the Elections Committee's consideration. Our feedback is in the spirit of the City's commitment to accessibility and people with disabilities as quoted above.

1. PDAC is again asking that polling stations be set up not just in care homes but in other residential facilities and in-patient rehabilitation facilities, for example GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre, hospitals and Oak Care Centre (formerly George Pearson Centre).
2. To increase the likelihood of participation, it is important that, at least 60 days prior to the election, elections staff communicate with disability organizations so that they can provide information to persons with disabilities about the ways in which voting will be accessible to them. It is essential that a variety of disability related organization be reached out to, with sufficient time to disperse this information to their members. PDAC has previously suggested organizations to reach out to. DABC and CNIB are just two examples.

3. Elections staff have a broader mandate than running elections day. They also need to ensure that information provided to the public and disability organizations is clear and accessible to people with a variety of disabilities including but not limited to vision loss, hearing loss, developmental disabilities and disabilities affecting someone's ability to process written material. This means ensuring that:
 - a. All information is provided in plain language and multiple formats, texts and fonts that are consistent with universal guidelines.
 - b. Elections pages on the websites are fully accessible to persons with cognitive, developmental and sensory disabilities.
 - c. Alternative communications are in plain language and describe the voting process in easily understood steps.
 - d. All videos include interpreters and are captioned for d/Deaf people and those who are Hard of Hearing.
4. To ensure accessibility of information, elections staff must involve PDAC and the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee and other relevant committees to provide input of materials with specific considerations to language, colour contrast and print size.
5. Voting and candidate materials need to be available in large print in large print and braille upon request.
6. Guide Dogs and Service Dogs are essential for many people with disabilities to participate in civic life. At voting places, and spaces for candidates' public events, these animals must be allowed on site and there must be space for them. Candidates and elections staff need to be trained about how to properly interact with human and dog teams at all elections related events, including voting.
7. With respect to transportation options to support people voting, we request that elections staff ask transportation bodies to remind riders to book their transportation to and from their voting place, early (e.g., HandyDART). The City may wish to consider setting up voting places at some SkyTrain and Canada Line stations, to increase accessibility.
8. We are pleased to note that the elections staff is recommending improvements to the priority line up. To do this, chairs must be provided at all voting places, and the chairs must be sufficiently sturdy to accommodate a full range of body types and disabilities.
9. Washroom access is a key consideration for many people with disabilities, some of whom will not participate in events unless they can be sure there is a nearby accessible washroom. Accessibility information about voting sites is welcome and important, but must not be used to reduce efforts to provide accessible voting places.
10. When hiring elections staff, it is important to hire community champions with lived experience from a variety of communities in the city, for example, people from the downtown east side. People with lived experience with homelessness, addiction and managing mental health conditions, need to be hired to work on election day, and to

train others while receiving financial compensation for doing so. Additionally, any training must include anti-oppression training, and input from the disability community.

11. In 2018, the City committed to PDAC to assist in all candidate meetings and announcements through the city website, and to provide PDAC's accessibility recommendations to meeting organizers. PDAC asks the City and its Elections staff to make accessible city spaces available to candidates for their meetings, and to provide information to candidates about how to make their events more accessible (i.e., booking ASL interpreter, ensuring accessible washroom access, labelling food for allergies). We understand that the City cannot regulate the candidates' events. Making accessible city space available, and providing information about how to make candidate events accessible, is not regulating candidates, and is consistent with the city's accessibility strategy and accessible event guidelines.
12. It is vital to publicize information about how people can register on the day they vote, and about the solemn declaration option for people without ID. This information needs to be communicated early and often, to increase voting access to residents who are marginalized.
13. The City also needs to increase their advertisement of curbside voting, in order to ensure awareness of this accessible option. This is especially important for those who are immunocompromised, have multiple chemical sensitivities, those with mobility challenges and people who are neurodiverse.
14. People with vision loss must be able to access magnifiers and other tools to allow them to read ballots and to vote independently. Additionally, there must be a person who is trained and authorized to assist people to vote at all times, at each voting place. Other elections staff need to be made aware of who is authorized to do that.
15. It is essential that that homebound voting be made available to voters with severe disabilities and health conditions. Please confirm that the City will be providing homebound voting for the 2026 election, as this was not mentioned in the Election's Committee's draft recommendations. To ensure this option is available to the people who need it most, elections staff need to reach out to organizations that serve them, such as GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre, Oak Care Centre, and the Individualized Funding Resource Centre (IFRC) Society.
16. There is no mention in the draft recommendations about the Cast Evolution Assistive Device to help people with a variety of disabilities vote independently. PDAC recommends that information detailing and demonstrating how to use the machine, their locations, and how long it will take to do so, be made available early in the election process. It is also vital that elections staff who are thoroughly trained on the use and function of this device, be on hand to support those who need to use it to vote. The City needs to consult programs that work with voters most likely to use this technology, such as the provincial respiratory outreach program (PROP), Technology for Living (TIL), and the Individualized Funding Resource Centre (IFRC) Society.

17. Finally, PDAC asks the Elections Committee to recommend to the City that they approach Union of BC municipalities to raise the issue of telephone voting for consideration by the Province. This method of voting makes the process of voting much more accessible, and for some, including people with vision loss or who are blind, it would be an important tool to be able to vote independently, when they would otherwise need help.

The Accessibility Strategy "... reinforces [the City of Vancouver's] recognition of the rights, dignity, and independence of people with disabilities within our communities. It strengthens our ability to foster a culture of equity and inclusion that values and includes all residents..."

As the Elections Committee only has one more meeting, in the spirit of the City's commitments in the Accessibility Strategy, we trust that elections staff will continue to work with advisory committees to ensure that the 2026 election is accessible to all residents who are eligible to vote.

Warm regards,

Salina M. Dewar, BA LL B
Vice-Chair, Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee

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