



PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

November 13, 2025

A meeting of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 5:31 pm, in the Joe Wai Room, Ground Floor, City Hall, and via electronic means.

PRESENT: Peter Brown, Chair
Tasia Alexis
John Atoyebi
Salina Dewar
Mikeal Frazer
Madeleine Grant
Tommy Leung
Sarah van Baarsen*

ABSENT: Vikram Bubber (Leave of Absence)
Niloofar Hedayati
Casey Skinner (Leave of Absence)
Avery Shannon

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Lucy Maloney, Council Liaison
Commissioner Tom Digby, Park Board Liaison
Jennifer Streckmann, Vancouver Public Library Liaison
Paul Storer, Director of Transportation; Staff Liaison
Laura Mackenrot, Former Co-Chair, Persons with
Disabilities Advisory Committee

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Cassia Nasralla, Meeting Coordinator

* Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

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 Tommy Leung
SECONDED by John Atoyebi

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve leaves of absence for Vikram Bubber and Casey Skinner, for this meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Salina Dewar
SECONDED by Mikeal Frazer

THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approve the minutes from the meeting of Thursday, September 11, 2025, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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At this point in the meeting, it was

*MOVED by Salina Dewar
SECONDED by Madeleine Grant*

THAT the Committee vary the order of the agenda to deal with item 7, New Business, first.

*CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY*

Note: For clarity the minutes are recorded in chronological order.

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7. New Business

Motion: Recommendations on Vancouver Building By-Law Amendments to Enable Single Egress Stairs

MOVED by Sarah van Baarsen
SECONDED by Salina Dewar

WHEREAS

1. As of 2022, 28.6% of British Columbians had at least one disability. The proportion of BC's population with disabilities is only projected to grow. This can be seen through both a growing aging population, as the prevalence of disability(ies) increases with age (Learning Disability Association of Canada, 2019), and the

precarious nature of life where one's situation can change suddenly, as throughout the course of our lives "we all exist on a spectrum of able-bodiedness," that can shift at any time, as people "experience injuries, illnesses, or disabilities" (Stack, 2014, pg. 1);

2. The United Nations affirms that the motto *Nothing About Us Without Us* "aims to provide an opportunity to focus on the active involvement and participation of persons with disabilities in the planning of strategies and policy" (United Nations, 2004). In this respect, there is a responsibility within the City of Vancouver to engage with people with lived experience as illustrated in focus areas 4 (Information and Communication) and 6 (Governance and Engagement) of the City's [Accessibility Strategy](#);
3. On April 10, 2025, the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee approved a motion which outlines recommendations that Council direct staff to ensure a number of provisions in developing changes to the Vancouver Building By-Law. Of note is the provision "that any updates to the Vancouver Building By-Law maintain the City of Vancouver's previous commitments on accessibility and meet the current objectives, goals and priorities outlined in the City's Accessibility Strategy";
4. Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability staff and Development, Buildings and Licencing staff were directed by Council on [February 26, 2025](#) to "undertake further due diligence in consultation with the building and architectural sectoral sector who work with the small and low-rise building space to further explore the housing flexibility and livability benefits single egress building designs could provide" requesting that "staff's report back and recommendations seek to limit any beneficial proposed additions to the Vancouver Building By-law in order to not add undue cost and complexity to opening up additional housing options in Vancouver";
5. Single egress stairways can create barriers resulting in detrimental risks to people with disabilities and first responders' health and safety in emergency situations. Safety experts, including those in the fire service community, have raised concerns about emergency evacuations, as even with enhanced safety measures like sprinklers and smoke-management systems, single egress stairways can:
 - a. Compromise escape routes;
 - b. Bottleneck and create delays during evacuations; and
 - c. Limit access to evacuation support;
6. Research on Canadian apartment fires shows (Garis, 2024):
 - a. Problems with smoke alarms in almost 9% of fires, while in 7.3%, automatic extinguishing equipment did not work because the fire was too small or other reasons;
 - b. 9% of fires originated in the means of egress—such as hallways and stairwells—and smoke affected primary access routes in more than 42% of the fires; and
 - c. That in over half of the unintentional residential fire deaths studied, the individual was age 70 and up, and 14% of unintentional residential fire

deaths, there were mobility-related issues (e.g. use of crutches or wheelchair) or cognitive impairments (e.g. dementia);

7. On October 24, 2025, the International Association of Fire Fighters highlighted the following 5 recent fatal fires in the US and Canada that exemplify the risks of single-exit residential buildings for occupants and firefighters:
 - a. Bronx, NY – December 28, 2017;
 - b. Worcester, MA – November 13, 2019;
 - c. Riverhead, NY – November 16, 2021;
 - d. Montreal, QC – March 16, 2023; and
 - e. Honolulu, HI – January 6, 2025;
8. On [September 13, 2024](#), the Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services (VFRS) shared a position paper to Mayor and Council on single exit buildings, which indicates that “VFRS does not support [the recent change to the BC Building Code to permit single egress stairways in small multi-unit residential buildings]”;
9. The City of Vancouver is “committed to supporting the full participation of persons with disabilities by establishing inclusive services, programs, and infrastructure, and by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers” ([City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy](#)), which is further emphasized in focus areas 1 (Built Environment and Public Spaces) and 3 (Housing Policies, Programs and Design) of the City’s Accessibility Strategy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee recommends that Council direct staff to ensure the following in exploring alternatives to multiple stair egress in the Vancouver Building By-Law:

- A. THAT the Committee emphasizes the importance of ensuring sufficient consultations in relation to proposed amendments to the Vancouver By-law, which remains an ongoing concern. Consultations must:
 - Occur in a timely manner and be accessible, with all proposed changes and feedback processes being presented in clear, plain language and formats to guarantee inclusivity for everyone;
 - Involve those most affected by potential changes, including persons with disabilities and older adults, along with families and organizations that support them;
 - Involve City of Vancouver advisory committees, such as the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee; Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee; Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee; Renters Advisory Committee; and Women's Advisory Committee; and
 - Involve other community organizations that advocate for these groups including, but not limited to, Disability Alliance BC, the Cerebral Palsy Association of BC, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Spinal Cord Injury BC, and the Developmental Disabilities Association.

- B. THAT any provisions to the Vancouver Building By-Law allowing single stair egress or alternative configurations:
- Not result in the creation of barriers or reduce the level of safety for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations;
 - Receive the support and endorsement of VFRS.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

1. Gastown Public Spaces Plan

Staff from Engineering Services, along with external consultants, provided a presentation and responded to questions.

2. Vision Zero Action Plan

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

3. Building Seismic Risk Reduction Action Plan – WITHDRAWN

This item was withdrawn from the agenda at the request of staff.

4. Working Session Updates

None.

5. Liaison Updates

The Staff Liaison and the Vancouver Public Library Liaison provided updates.

6. Subcommittee Updates

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

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Tommy Leung
SECONDED by Tasia Alexis

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Sarah van Baarsen absent for the vote)

Next Meeting:

DATE: Thursday, January 8, 2026
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Joe Wai Room, Ground Floor, City Hall
/ Teams Meeting

The Committee adjourned at 7:33 pm.

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