

North Shore Accessibility Advisory Committee

MINUTES

Thursday, September 25, 2025 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Hybrid (In-Person District of North Vancouver Hall and Virtual via MS Teams)

Present

- Margarete Wiedmann, DNV
- Julianna Ramirez, DNV
- Sam Douglas, DNV
- Farinaz (Naz) Havaei, CNV, (Co-Chair)
- Lucy Prichard-Mandl, CNV
- Mehdi Mirzaee, CNV
- James Hanley, DWV, (Chair)

Guests:

- Blair Underhill – Planner 2 (CNV Transportation Planning)
- Lily Yumagulova – North Shore Resilience Strategy Manager (North Shore Emergency Management (NSEM))
- Taylor Legere, Planning Assistant, NSEM
- Rudi Ballard, Planning Assistant, NSEM
- Emily Dicken, Director, NSEM

Staff Liaisons

- Maria de Fatima Lazo, Staff Liaison, DNV
- Jill Tapp, Staff Liaison, CNV
- Magda Trespalacios, Staff, Liaison, CNV
- Maeve Bermingham, Staff Liaison, DWV
- Riley McLeod, Staff Liaison, DWV
- Mary Jukich, Committee Clerk, DNV

Council Liaisons

- Cllr. Shervin Shahriari, CNV

Regrets

- Carole Hawthorne
- Jessica Neville
- Biljana Kuzamnouska
- Cllr. Catherine Pope, DNV
- Cllr. Christine Cassidy, DWV

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:34 and presented a land acknowledgement.

2. Accessibility Features and Meeting Agreements

An overview was presented of the accessibility features and meeting agreements as follows:

- Agenda and slide deck shared in advance of meeting.
- Close captioning provided.
- 10-minute break.
- Attachments clearly named so that revised or updated versions are apparent in the file name.
- All meeting attendees are asked to identify themselves before speaking.
- All meeting attendees are asked to speak slowly to support accurate captions and general comprehension.

Committee members were also invited to reach out to the committee clerk if there was anything further that would support members.

A brief overview was also provided of the community agreements. This is a practice to set the foundation of how to engage to ensure there are positive and respectful conversations. Some of the key highlights were as follows:

- Listen with curiosity & compassion
- Be patient, practice taking a pause
- Hold space for multiple truths
- Take space, make space
- Lean into discomfort
- Respect personal experiences

3. Adoption of Agenda

Margarete Wiedmann moved and Mehdi Mirzaee seconded:

The agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Adoption of the July 31, 2025 Minutes

James Hanley moved and Mehdi Mirzaee seconded:

The minutes be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

5. SPARC Local Community Accessibility Grant

Staff provided a presentation to support an application from the City of North Vancouver for the local community accessibility grant program. The program is administered by Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) and is funded by the Government of British Columbia. The funding available is up to \$25,000 (one-time) for a project to help remove barriers for people with disabilities.

The project identified by the City of North Vancouver is to install hearing loops at the City Hall reception and the Gerry Brewer Building reception (North Vancouver RCMP). This project is important because hearing loops help community members and staff with hearing aids to communicate clearly. A hearing loop is already in Council Chambers and the funding would extend the technology to other busy, public-facing spaces.

On completion of the presentation, the following key items were discussed:

- Committee members requested clarification as to the rationale for choosing the City Hall reception and the Gerry Brewer Building. Staff reported that during the actioning of the accessibility plan, City owned and managed properties were assessed and prioritized by accessibility. Part of the criteria in assessing eligible properties was that the property was owned and managed by the City of North Vancouver and who would be most impacted. As there is high community and staff traffic, it was determined that the two properties met the requirements. In addition, the City commissioned a certified assessor from the Rick Hanson Foundation to look at the properties and part of their assessment was to install the hearing loops.
- Committee members requested the data used to inform the selection of the locations. Staff provided information indicating that City Hall is the location with the larger proportion of employees. As of December 2024, 42% of staff worked out of this location and includes temporary and auxiliary staff. The Gerry Brewer Building, 18% of staff from police support services and bylaws, however, non CNV staff includes staff from NSEM, NS RCMP, Office for restorative services and DNV bylaws. The next largest location by employee count is the CNV operations centre at 18%, however there is no public access to this location. Staff also provided their email mtrespalacios@cnv.org if there were additional questions.

Margarete Wiedmann moved and Naz Havaei seconded:

That the North Shore Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the City of North Vancouver in applying for the B.C. Provincial Government's Local Community Accessibility Grant, delivered by SPARC BC, with the goal of advancing the City's Accessibility Plan through installing a hearing assistance system (induction loops) into the City Hall and the Gerry Brewer Building reception areas.

CARRIED

6. Curb Access & Parking Plan – Initial Implementation

Staff provided a summary of the parking changes occurring in the City as it relates to the Curb Access & Parking Plan that was endorsed by Council in the spring. In addition, a summary was provided of the changes that are specifically occurring to accessible parking in the City, as follows:

- Expand pay parking in high-demand areas to increase parking turnover and availability.
- Update the resident and visitor parking policy by expanding coverage and adjusting eligibility criteria and costs.
- Expand short-term loading zones for the efficient and safe movement of people and goods.
- Provide more accessible on-street parking spaces in close proximity to shops, services, and key destinations across the city.

Accessible Parking Changes as follows:

- Increasing number of on-street accessible parking spaces
- Barrier-free accessible spaces are wider to support a wide range of people with mobility challenges. They are typically found in angled parking bays or off-street lots.
- Priority accessible spaces are parallel parking spots offering convenience for a wide range of people with mobility limitations. Most of these spaces support passenger-side wheelchair access to sidewalks, but may not meet the needs of all.
- Creation of a web map with accessible parking spaces in the City
 - Shows on-street spaces and off-street spaces in public parking lots
 - Includes several attributes:
 - Address, cost for parking, near letdown, extra wide, above ground or below ground

Vehicles with SPARC placards may park for free in the following locations:

- On-street accessible parking spaces operated by the City
- Accessible parking spaces in City-owned off-street parking lots
- Time-limited except with permit and pay parking except with permit areas

Time limit is 72 hours in permit areas and vary for accessible spaces. Having a valid SPARC permit does not mean free parking in Pay Parking areas. You still need to pay the posted hourly rates.

Upcoming schedule & monitoring

- Parking changes being implemented near Lonsdale in fall 2025
- Monitoring and adjustment through 2026 based on parking demand.
- Expansion of parking changes to other parts of the City in 2027.

On completion of the presentation, the following comments were provided by staff and committee members:

- Committee members requested clarification regarding the financial considerations and impact of implementing the parking changes particularly for people with the SPARC placard and the accessible parking spaces around the medical office corridor and the area around John Braithwaite Community Centre. Staff reported that the intention was to increase the amount of the parking supply of the accessible parking spaces, and the intention around central and lower Lonsdale is to have more than double the amount of accessible parking spaces. In addition, if it is determined that the demand is outweighing the supply of accessible spaces, this issue will be revisited.
- Staff informed the committee that some of the areas adjacent to the Lonsdale corridor is marked with “pay parking except with permit” and this is to encourage and prioritize residents; however, this is a valid location that a SPARC placard can be used.
- Staff reported that feedback received from the previous ACDI committee members and community members at large indicated not enough accessible parking spaces and the intention of the project is to more than double the number of dedicated accessible spaces on the street to compliment off street accessible parking. The timeline is approximately two months coming online in lower and central Lonsdale, and additional spaces will be considered for future phases outside of the corridor.
- A committee member requested information with respect to a situation wherein an accessible parking spot was in use, whether they would have to pay to park in a metered parking spot. Staff responded that beyond the number of accessible stalls that are being increased, between Lonsdale and the 100 and 200 blocks, there are areas that have more permit parking where SPARC permits can continue to be used. In addition, committee members were invited to provide their feedback on the changes if the experience is not creating the intended conditions.
- Staff reported that in terms of providing extra wide accessible parking spaces in areas that only have parallel parking, the City has assigned this as accessible parallel parking and referred to as “priority accessible spaces”. The priority accessible spaces

will accommodate side passenger loading onto a wide sidewalk or an area close to let downs in a driveway that allows for rear loading.

- A committee member requested information as to whether there was consideration for parking spots to be recessed into the sidewalk structure. Staff indicated that this can be discussed with the sidewalk infrastructure team.
- Committee members requested clarification on whether monitoring alone will address the issue of people without SPARC placards parking in accessible spots. Staff reported that as part of the initiative, the bylaw enforcement team has been increased to focus specifically on parking and will have the discretion to apply maximum charges for people parking contrary to the accessible parking signs.
- In terms of loading zones for passengers and for delivery drivers/delivery trucks, as part of the curb access and parking plan, the City incorporated 50 additional loading zones to lower and central Lonsdale that are short term and are intended to provide the ability for the delivery trucks to use those spaces instead of the SPARC accessible parking spaces.
- Committee members were informed that the web map showing accessible parking is posted to the City webpage.
- A committee member requested information on whether there has been consideration to reserve accessible spots around medical offices, etc., and if there would be value to reserve and book those spots. Staff reported that this was feedback that was previously received, and could be considered; however, the main issues of not moving forward at this time, is social norms and enforcement.

Julianna Ramirez moved and Naz Havaei seconded:

Having reviewed the project and heard the presentation provided, the committee thanks the guest speaker for the opportunity to review the project and request that the feedback received is considered.

CARRIED

7. Check-in and Break

Committee members took a break from 6:27 – 6:37.

8. Accessible Emergency Management – North Shore Emergency Management

Representatives from the North Shore Emergency Management (NSEM) provided a presentation on Accessible Emergency Management.

Some of the responsibilities of NSEM are as follows:

Support the three North Shore municipalities its residents, and guests to prepare for and respond to hazards and emergencies on the North Shore:

- Implement, develop and/or share annual and ongoing training, exercises, education, research and plans, to meet the extensive needs of the North Shore community
- Assess emergencies and administer Emergency Support Services (ESS) when incidents occur
- Work with partner agencies to effectively coordinate and support emergency response and recovery
- Develop procedures, plans, operational guidelines, cooperative agreements and technical documents that promote cultural safety and ensure effective coordinated action in an emergency

The North Shore Resilience Strategy:

- Provides a regional framework to strengthen community resilience to multiple hazards, which are expected to grow in frequency and severity due to climate change.
- Accessibility is one of the regional priorities for the Strategy and is being co-developed through the Accessible Emergency Management Working Group.

On completion of the presentation, committee members provided input on lived experience and the presenters invited committee members to provide further feedback on any barriers or additional supports that may be required.

Julianna Ramirez moved and Naz Havaei seconded:

Having reviewed the project and heard the presentation provided, the committee thanks the guest speaker for the opportunity to review the project and request that the feedback received is considered.

CARRIED

9. Emerging Issues

No emerging issues were identified.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

11. Next Meeting:

- Special Meeting – Thursday, October 30, 2025
- City of North Vancouver – City Hall