

North Shore Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 29, 2026 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Hybrid (In-Person and Virtual via MS Teams)

Present

General Members

- Margarete Wiedmann, DNV
- Farinaz Havaei, CNV
- Mehdi Mirzaee, CNV
- James Hanley, DWV
- Anne Labelle, DWV

Presenters

- Christina Bennett, Access & Community Services Manager, DWV

Staff Liaisons

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

Council Liaisons

- Cllr. Shervin Shahriari, CNV
- Cllr Catherine Pope, DNV

Regrets:

- Sam Douglas, DNV
- Lucy Prichard-Mandi, CNV
- Carole Hawthorne
- Jessica Neville
- Biljana Kuzamnouska
- Cllr. Christine Cassidy, DWV

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

The chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and provided the 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

Anne Labelle moved and Margarete Wiedmann seconded:
That the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Adoption of the November 27, 2025 Minutes

Farinaz Havaei moved and Mehdi Mirzaee seconded:
That the minutes be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

5. 2026 Chair and Vice Chair

As the committee was formed in May 2025, James Hanley and Farinaz Havaei have not yet completed a full one-year term in their roles as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. Accordingly, they will continue in their role as Chair and Vice Chair to ensure adequate time is given in their respective roles. Elections will take place in January 2027 to align with the regular Chair election schedule.

6. Introductions and Welcome New Member

New committee member, Anne Labelle was introduced and welcomed to the committee.

Committee members were also introduced and welcomed to the committee.

7. 2026 Meeting Schedule / Work Plan

An overview was provided of the anticipated schedule for municipal presentations for the remainder of the year. A regular meeting typically includes two slots for presentation on a municipal project or initiative followed by a question period and feedback or comments provided by committee members. Each meeting also has another section for emerging issues from the Chair which gives members an opportunity to bring forward any topics for the attention of the committee or staff or for general discussion. The schedule includes staffs' understanding of current projects. As staff continue to request updates from project teams, and the work plan during the year, additional presentations may also be slotted.

The tentative project initiatives that may come to the committee are as follows:

- CNV Library Accessibility Plan
- Accessibility in the 2026 Municipal Elections
- Opening of Harry Jerome Recreation Centre & Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre
- Wayfinding Project
- Updates to Accessibility Plans
- Accessibility Plan – year in reviews

In addition, staff anticipate that the committee will need to use the two special meetings permitted under the terms of reference, and the following proposed special meeting dates were put forward for the committee's consideration:

- April 30 - Tentative Hold Possibly: CNV Library & Tri-Muni Elections
- June
- August
- October 29 - Tentative Hold Possibly: Accessibility Plan Year in Reviews (or Accessibility Plan Updates)

For planning purposes related to 2026 attendance and quorum, committee members were requested to confirm their availability for meetings. Confirmations are valued, as quorum is necessary to proceed and requires the presence of at least five members. Committee members were also requested to inform the Committee Clerk of any anticipated absences. Members are kindly reminded that three consecutive absences would be considered a resignation from the committee. In such instances, staff liaisons will follow up with the Chair and the committee member to confirm.

Committee members experiencing barriers to participation are encouraged to reach out to staff liaisons and/or the Chair for support. Staff remain committed to working collaboratively with members to help facilitate and sustain their participation.

8. Check-in and Break

Committee members took a break from 6:30 – 6:40 pm.

9. Ambleside Beach Accessibility Discussion

Committee members were provided with a presentation on accessibility at Ambleside Beach. Some of the key highlights were around gathering feedback on the existing Mobi-mat (accessible mat which is placed on the sand to allow people access to the beach), the Ambleside Pier, an accessible beach wheel chair available from the life guard station that allows people to access the beach area and water, and any other accessibility considerations for Ambleside Beach. On completion of the presentation, the following comments and feedback were provided by committee members:

- Create a sitting area with benches or chairs with arms that are appropriate widths and heights for people who need the support to get themselves in and out of a chair. Having washrooms and a water fountain close to the beach area is helpful to avoid walking a long ways to find one.
- Consider places to sit for those who use canes.
- In terms of the beach mat placement, placing the mat on a hard surface/concrete walkway in order to avoid erosion and possibly consider something more permanent that does not need to be rolled out.
- Provide accessible seating in the ramp/walkway for those accompanying people in wheelchairs.
- The mat may not be access for people with canes.
- In terms of planning models for accessible beaches, some examples include the Sunshine Coast.
- It is important to consider the environmental repercussions of the beach mat especially about asphalt, plastic use, etc. and enjoying the beach should not come at the cost of the environment.
- The surface of the pier may be a concern for people in wheel chairs or those who use walking aids because of the possible slippery surface and the wooden plank surface sometimes is not flat.
- The presenter reported that for people in wheelchairs, there is one accessible beach wheelchair with bubble wheels that can be accessed from the lifeguard station and used to access the ocean and beach area. The bubble wheelchair is available all summer and further information is posted on the website.
- Consider having a destination area by the beach mat for sitting and enjoying the beach similar to that at the City of Vancouver.
- In terms of the floating chair, feedback was provided that the chair may be useful to some people but it might not be accessible to everyone because it sits too low from the ground and does not have arm rests which will make it difficult for someone getting into and out of the chair.

- A concern was also raised around access points for leaving and entering the seawall particularly for people in wheelchairs. However, it was also noted that the seawall is a great feature for people with wheelchairs and walkers and generally is great for access to the sea.
- The presenter indicated they would connect with the committee members in the future to invite those who are interested to test some of the equipment and provide further feedback.

Farnaz Havaei moved and Mehdi Mirzaee seconded:

THAT the committee thanks the guest speaker for the opportunity to review the project and request that the feedback received is considered.

CARRIED

10. Emerging Issues – Survey Update

The following emerging issues

- Work is underway in developing a survey for the committee members to indicate the topics that may be of interest for the committee to discuss during the 2026 year.
- Staff will report back regarding possible civic sponsored watch parties for FIFA and accessibility issues for the community events.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 pm.

12. Next Meeting

- Meeting – Thursday, March 26, 2026 at 5:30 pm.
District of North Vancouver Municipal Hall