North Shore Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 28, 2026 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Hybrid (In-Person and Virtual via MS Teams)

Present

General Members

- Margarete Wiedmann, DNV
- Sam Douglas, DNV
- Nashila Premji, DNV
- Farinaz Havaei, CNV
- Mehdi Mirzaee, CNV
- James Hanley, DWV
- Anne Labelle, DWV

Presenters

- Christina Bennett, Access and Community Services Manager, DWV

Staff Liaisons

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

Council Liaisons

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

Regrets:

- Lucy Prichard-Mandl, CNV
- Carole Hawthorne
- Jessica Neville
- Biljana Kuzamnouska
- Clare Averiss, Director, CNV
- Cllr. Christine Cassidy, DWV

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

The Chair called the meeting to order and provided 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

Moved by Anne Labelle and seconded by Sam Douglas
That the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Other Business

Committee members were informed that at the April 30, 2026 meeting, the committee attendance did not reach quorum and therefore the March 26, 2026 minutes and April 30, 2026 minutes were brought to the meeting for approval.

5. Adoption of the March 26, 2026 Minutes

Moved by Sam Douglas and seconded by Anne Labelle
That the minutes be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

6. Adoption of the April 30, 2026 Minutes

On review of the minutes, an error was noted that Cllr Shervin Shahrari was listed under regrets; however, he was present at the meeting.

Moved by Anne Labelle and seconded by Sam Douglas
That the minutes be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

7. Introductions

A roundtable introduction was provided by the committee members.

8. DWV Local Community Accessibility Grant Application

Christina Bennett, Access and Community Services Manager, District of West Vancouver provided a presentation on the grant application to SAPRC to support some accessibility programming and staff training at the West Vancouver recreation Centre.

Funded by: Government of British Columbia and administered through SPARC BC
Funding Available: Up to $25,000

Purpose: To remove barriers for persons with disabilities by implementing one of the initiatives identified in a Municipalities Accessibility Plan

City Context: The District of West Vancouver plans to increase inclusion in recreation programs for children and youth through staff training, expansion of adaptive options and purchase of equipment/supplies.

Program Proposal

Project: Increase inclusion to recreation programs and services
- Gleneagles Community Centre
- West Vancouver Community Centre

What is included in the Project
- Training for recreation instructors in program design and operations to support increase inclusion of people with disabilities
- Expansion of recreation program offerings designed for children and youth with disabilities
- Purchase of recreation equipment / supplies to support new adapted recreational programs

On discussion, the following comments were provided:

- If there will be any overlap of the grant for seniors programs. The presenter indicated that the some of the grant will be for seniors. However, seniors programs are further ahead in being adaptive for individuals than programs for children and

youth especially in fitness and caregiver supports. It was noted that all staff instructions will be welcome to participate in the training.

- Whether a consultation process was undertaken to determine the application of the funding. The presenter indicated that there was no consultation; however, staff interact with parents and there are conversations with families around needs for kids and to participate in community programming.

Moved by Anne Labelle and seconded by Naz Harvaei

That the North Shore Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the District of West Vancouver in applying for the BC Provincial Government's Local Community Accessibility Grant, delivered by SPARC BC, with the goal of advancing the District's Accessibility Plan through strengthening of service delivery and recreation programming to allow for greater inclusion.

CARRIED

9. Check-in and Break

Committee members took a break from 6:00 pm to 6:10 pm.

10. DNV Accessibility Plan Update

Maria de Fatima Lazo, Staff Liaison, District of North Vancouver introduced the Accessibility Plan Update for the committee's feedback.

The 2023 – 2026 Accessibility Plan was developed over a six-stage process.

Stage 1 – Engagements: barriers and challenges

Stage 2 – Background document review

Stage 3 – Framework of the plan

Stage 4 – Key themes/goals

Stage 5 – Guiding approach

Stage 6 – Implementation plan

This led to the creation of the framework and wwithin the framework six goals and implementation actions were developed for the three irritation of the plan:

- Address attitudinal barriers towards people with visible and invisible disabilities
- Build staff capacity to identify, remove, and prevent barriers
- Increase accessibility practices for service and program delivery

- Create inclusive and diverse employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- Improve the physical accessibility of public infrastructure and spaces within our community
- Monitor and evaluate this plan to allow for improvement and adjustment as needed

Per the Accessible BC Act:

- An organization must review and update its accessibility plan at least once every 3 years
- Consult its accessibility committee
- Consider any public feedback

The 2023-2026 Plan has a robust framework with evergreen goals, therefore the primary focus of the update will be on the implementation actions, including:

- Metrics of success
- Progress
- Barriers, gaps and opportunities
- New actions
- Alignment with provincial standards, CNV and DWV

Committee members were requested to provide feedback on the six goals and subsequent actions, documented as follows:

Address attitudinal barriers

- In terms of staff training there was a question on whether there will be regular training sessions for staff and training for new staff and if there was consideration in bringing in people with individual disabilities, ie. vision, hearing, mobility, etc., and talk about lived experience. Staff reported that currently the plan does not set out a specific frequency for training; however, Human Resources have tried to offer training at least once or twice per year for all staff. So far the training has focussed on the foundations of accessibility and different disabilities and the suggestion for lived experience will be considered.

  A suggestion was presented for dialogue between staff and individuals with disabilities to share their experiences rather than a one-way communication process. In terms of the nature and structure of the training, it was suggested that

there is in-person interaction to maximize learning rather than individuals learning through a module or lecture.

- It was suggested that an ombudsperson be hired to independently address matters or issues that may arise from time to time.

- It may be beneficial for staff to do experiential learning sessions, ie, pretend to be blind, walk with a cane, etc.

- Information was requested with respect to evaluations and how training will be measured and perhaps integrate some sort of evaluation into the training. In this regard, it was suggested that KPI's may be beneficial to measure success and in terms of retrospectives for lessons learned. Staff noted that the current plan has metrics of success; however, a further review of the actions will be undertaken and that information will be brought back to the committee.

Build staff capacity to address barriers

- It was suggested that, to reduce barriers, data collection must be easier, ie, sending feedback by email, or via the website.

- Committee members also emphasized to pay attention to issues around privacy and confidentiality with the data that is being collected.

Accessibility in services and programs

- To provide hybrid programs whenever possible to make things easier for people to participate.

- To ensure the website is accessible and easy to navigate around the website itself. Staff reported that a full accessibility audit was undertaken on the website and the North Shore Advisory Committee for Disability Issues was engaged and a further audit will be undertaken to review the initial results to identify any gaps.

- To consider making the website dark mode compatible because people with visual disability find it easier to read on a computer if its dark mode.

- Further feedback was provided on educating the public and persons with disabilities how to manage in an emergency and to push out the information to organizations that have a wide reach among people with disabilities. The District of North Vancouver Fire Department has a voluntary registration program that this information could be added to.

- Consideration be given that a subset can be added for notifications for people with disabilities on the Alertable App.

Inclusive and diverse employment opportunities

- There was a question on whether there have been conversations with WorkSafe on how the implementation will address any barriers. Training should be two-sided;

training for the person with disabilities to ensure success and training for the employer in order to adapt and determine how to support the individual to ensure a positive work experience. The Neill Squire Society can also assist with adaptable equipment and ideas to set up a person's workstation.

- In terms of supporting individuals with disabilities, the municipality can consider a job-sharing situation to support invisible barriers such as medical appointments, etc.

- Staff were also asked to consider accessibility in the pre-employment/recruitment phase so that the process is equitable and fair to all individuals.

Accessibility in public infrastructure and spaces

- Concern was raised around infrastructure planning, particularly as some things are missed by planners such as having a handrail for slopes, cut-outs on sidewalks being steep and not gradual, and to take into consideration when there are stairs or bumps that they are painted and more visible, and that paving stones are dangerous when they start to buckle for people with walkers.

- In terms of retrofitting older buildings, to remove the step in the front door, and replacing buttons on doors for apartments, when doing renovations. Also have Bylaw officers do audits of public buildings/businesses and report items that may need to be updated to ensure accessibility for everyone.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Project teams can consider talking to the users after the project is completed to reassess to determine what may or may not be working.

- In terms of an ombudsperson, instead of writing a request, consider having an open office for conversations to articulate their thoughts.

Moved by Sam Douglas and seconded by Anne Labelle

That the feedback received on the DNV Accessibility Plan Update is considered.

CARRIED

11. Emerging Issues and Survey Update

Staff provided an update on the outcome of the recent survey that was conducted to identify topics to be discussed during the committee meetings. The survey received four responses and the following three topics identified:

- Built environment

- Education and awareness
- Policies and programs

At the last meeting it was suggested if it would be beneficial to dedicate time for discussion of each of these topics so that information can be compiled.

During the discussion, the following additional emerging issues were raised:

- The new fields at Inter River Park area is not accessible from the parking area onto the concourse. There is a curb cut parallel to the accessible parking spot and there is a threshold and the cutout is not flat. In terms of the washrooms, there is only one accessible washrooms and six/seven regular washrooms.

- There are a lot of obstructed pathways particularly around Lonsdale wherein storefronts are displaying their products/advertising boards which could pose a problem for people with visual disabilities.

- In terms of the new Lynn Creek Recreation Centre, there is no longer street parking and whether the District could pave where the old building stood. Information was provided that across the street from the new community centre, there is a line of parking spaces including accessible parking spaces.

12. Adjournment

Anne Labelle moved and Naz Havaei seconded:
The meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

Next Meeting:

- Thursday, July 30, 2026

  In-person at the District of North Vancouver Municipal Hall and online via Microsoft Teams