

North Shore Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 26, 2026 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Online (via MS Teams)

Present

General Members

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

Presenters

- Riley McLeod, Community Planner, DWV
- Genevieve Lanz, Director of Legislative Services and Corporate Officer, DNV
- Amelia Cifarelli, Director of Legislative Services, Corporate Officer & Chief Election Officer, CNV

Staff Liaisons

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

Regrets

- Sam Douglas, DNV
- Lucy Prichard-Mandl, CNV
- Carole Hawthorne
- Jessica Neville
- Biljana Kuzamnouska
- Cllr. Catherine Pope, DNV
- Cllr. Shervin Shahriari, CNV
- Cllr. Christine Cassidy, DWV

- Clare Averiss, Director, CNV
- Hope Dallas, Senior Manager of Legislative Services, DWV

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

James Hanley called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and provide 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

Farinaz Havaei moved and Mehdi Mirzaee seconded

That the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Adoption of the January 29, 2026 Minutes

Farinaz Havaei moved and Mehdi Mirzaee seconded

The minutes be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

5. General Municipal Election

Amelia Cifarelli, Corporate Officer, City of North Vancouver, Genevieve Lanz, Corporate Officer, District of North Vancouver and Riley McLeod, Staff Liaison, District of West Vancouver provided a presentation on the general municipal election, and some of the key highlights were as follows:

- General Municipal Elections are held every 4 years to fill the role of Mayor, Councillors and School Trustees
- General voting day: October 17th, 2026
- Resident and non-resident property electors are eligible to vote as long as they meet the criteria (ie. 18+, Canadian citizen, resident of BC for at least 6 months, etc.)
- Eligible voters can vote through a mail-in ballot, curbside voting, advanced voting or on general voting day

Election Accessibility: What Does It Mean?

The goal is to provide all eligible candidates and voters equal access to nominations, registration and voting in the local election by identifying, minimizing or removing and preventing barriers and therefore making the elections process accessible and inclusive and the following is undertaken to achieve the goal:

- Identify potential barriers during the planning stage
- Recognize the diverse set of requirements that may be needed, including legislative requirements
- Consult with accessibility experts to identify gaps and best practices
- Allocate resources effectively
- Advertise and promote accessibly features
- Provide information about the election in a variety of format

General Municipal Election – CNV Focus

- Examples of Previous Accessibility Features:
 - Navigational signage
 - Clear, unobstructed pathways
 - Curbside voting
- Examples of Proposed Accessibility Features:
 - Braille Ballots
 - Map of Accessibility Features
 - Accessible Parking

General Municipal Election – DNV Focus

- What we are already doing:
 - Curbside voting

- Ballot marking assistance
- Special Voting Opportunity – Lions Gate Hospital
- Expanded Mail Ballot Voting Advertisement
- Improved Signage for Voting Sites
- Review of Election website for inclusive language and enhanced accessibility
- Provincial legislation restrictions:
 - Phone voting or online voting options not available
 - General Municipal Election – DNV Focus Pt. 2
- Proposed DNV Accessibility Features:
 - Review Voter Information and Voting Guide Online and In-person
 - Accessibility Check-list for Voting Site Selection and Setup
 - Enhanced Accessibility Training for Election Staff
 - Review of Candidate Forms (available online and in-person)
 - Accessibility Feedback Forms at Voting Sites and online
 - Assistive Voting for Voting Machine

General Municipal Election – DWV Focus

- What we are already doing:
 - Barrier free voting locations
 - Mail ballot voting and curbside voting
 - Voting assistance (declaration required)
 - Special voting opportunity at the Senior's Activity Centre
 - Improved signage and circulation for voting locations
 - Use of plain-language, large-print versions and screen-reader compatible formats for website and print materials
- Provincial legislation restrictions:
 - Phone voting or online voting options not available
- Proposed DWV Accessibility Features:
 - Accessible parking and drop-off locations
 - Provide “access details” for every voting location (transit routes/stops, elevator instructions (if needed), availability of accessible washrooms, availability of curbside voting and how to request it)
 - Provide for an on-call facilities contact for rapid adjustments as may be required
 - Pre-opening walk-through to test access for various mobilities, wayfinding/signage and general circulation
 - Accessibility feedback forms at voting sites and online, and post-election “lessons learned” debrief
 - Voting machine assistance

On completion of the presentation, the following key comments and feedback was provided by the committee members:

- A suggestion was presented that although there is accessible parking, the path/route to the parking needs to be accessible and have no barriers. Some examples provided was

at William Griffith Park the pathway in is not an even surface, and Karen Magnessun has an area that is precarious to walk in.

- At the polling place, ensure that there is a straight route without long hallways, elevators, etc.
- A question was raised on whether the curbside voting will be available during advance polling dates. Staff indicated that the curbside voting will be available at all voting opportunities, advance and general voting day and at all voting sites. In terms of process, there is a greeter station and when the individual identifies the need for curbside voting, the election official will get the voting staff required to carry out the voting and approach the individual voting.
- A recommendation was made to have chairs at different heights and with arm supports available in the voting room for people who are not wheelchair users. In addition, it was suggested to provide non-collapsible chairs, and to provide proper chairs for the staff working at the election.
- With respect to the accessible voting advertisement, staff from the three municipalities are working with their respective Communications departments and accessibility experts to review language, format, colouring and the web content.
- In terms of ways and methods for advertising, staff indicated that there will be advertising in the newspapers, mail-outs, website, social media, advertising through the bus shelters, community recreation centres, libraries and community outreach. Details of the communication plan are being finalized.
- It was suggested to also consider advertising in some of the cultural newspapers, newsletters, etc. In addition, it may be beneficial to also contact Lionsview Seniors Planning as they connect people with seniors' agencies.

Consider having a line up for people with accessibility challenges so that they do not have to wait and can get through the process more quickly.

- To be mindful of possible hazards of weather conditions that may make conditions challenging for people with mobility issues.
- Regarding the curbside voting, a concern was raised regarding election integrity and how that would be addressed particularly as part of the process would be to bring the ballot box outside.
- Clarification was also requested as to who would be using the curbside voting option process and determining who needs the service. Municipal staff may become overwhelmed if everyone chooses to use that option for voting.
- Staff were also requested to consider safety in terms of the curbside voting and asked for processes in place to address safety concerns around traffic.

Anne Labelle moved and Farinaz Havaei seconded
That the feedback received is considered.

CARRIED

6. Check-in and Break

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

7. DWV Accessibility Plan Update

Riley McLeod, staff liaison, District of West Vancouver provided an update on the District of West Vancouver's process for the 2026 Accessibility Plan update, including context around history, process, initial ideas and next steps related to the Plan. Some of the key highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- Guided by the Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA), as of 2021
- The ABCA requires local governments to have an accessibility committee, feedback tool, and plan.
- First official Accessibility Plan adopted in 2023 and was a comprehensive process, involving:
 - Working with consulting firm Urban Matters
 - Input from previous committee, the NS ACDI
 - Collaboration with the Interdivisional Staff Team
Staff from the District of West Vancouver, West Vancouver Memorial Library, and West Vancouver Police Department.
 - Scope includes the organisation, District facilities and services, and public spaces
- The plan was created to address the 6 barriers which also align with the provincial plan.
- The Accessibility Plan has an action plan, and within this there are 28 action items, 6 goals, and 7 priority areas that address 7 barriers.
- In terms of the process, this is the first plan update and is required every 3 years. The update will build on the foundation of the 2023 plan and be smaller in scale, with a focus on strengthening existing actions and implementation, and looking for gaps and opportunities. If applicable, staff will look to incorporate any Provincial standards. The plan update will involve consultation with the accessibility committee and consideration of comments received from public feedback tool.
- The Timeline and Process Overview will be as follows:
 - First Phase - Winter/Spring: Gathering Initial Ideas and Consultation
 - Second Phase - Summer/Fall: Draft Revised Actions
- This is an iterative and ongoing process, and a living document. Both staff and members of the public can benefit from the plan. Any feedback will help to inform the next three years of the priorities for the District's accessibility actions and input will help build staff and committee capacity, and build accessibility into the District's work.

Staff workshops were held to review existing action items and discuss progress on the current plan actions, gaps and opportunities, new ideas and what additional steps are

needed to achieve those actions in order to approve implementation. The following themes were identified:

- Training & Education
 - Find more opportunities to offer and encourage training for staff on ableism/disability awareness; Removing barriers (in the workplace, services, facilities), and ;Universal design.
 - Prioritising providers with lived-experience
 - Continue to review and update training regularly
- Communication of Accessible Assets and Services
 - Improving how we communicate and raise awareness of our current and future accessible assets, resources, and services
 - Finding new ways to reach people
 - Ensuring current assets and initiatives are mapped or made publicly-available
 - Ensure future updates continue to be shared
- Removing Barriers: Invisible Disabilities
 - Existing actions inclusive of all disabilities
 - Opportunity for action(s) that aim to remove or prevent barriers for people with invisible Disabilities (i.e., Sensory-safe spaces that are inclusive for neurodiversity, such as Tranquility Park, Birdsong Path, etc.)
 - Could help to inspire new initiatives and/or better communicate existing spaces and services that address these barriers.
- Safety/ Emergency Management
 - Capture the tri-municipal collaboration with NSEM
 - In the workplace, continue documenting of employee accommodation needs and consider opportunities to confidentially create emergency plans (as necessary)
 - Training for staff/ first responders (tools and awareness)
- Implementation
 - Opportunity for a more thorough review and plan for implementation
 - Identifying measures of success or sub-actions
 - Update process for departmental progress reporting

In terms of providing feedback, committee members were provided with the presenter's contact information, and also an email remainder will be sent out requesting feedback. On discussion, the following key comments and feedback was provided by the committee members:

- When training staff, it is important to repeat the training every few years in order to capture new staff and also implement any new changes that were implemented into the plan. Staff should be trained on working with and supporting people with disabilities, and to understand that they do not have to be afraid of people with disabilities. Training should be on a regular basis and put into practice regularly.
- Finding ways to help people with accessibility issues whether their disability is visible or invisible.

- Many of the items in the initial ideas were not addressing systemic or root-causing items. There was no mention of a policy review/policy evaluation in terms of accessibility issues (i.e. handicap toilets, existing District policies and codes). Perhaps address more root causes and have consideration be given to including policy evaluation in the Plan.
- A suggestion was provided to prioritize safety particularly for people with physical disabilities. For example, crossing crosswalks can be challenging with the 15-second countdown, as well as the cracks/pot holes in the sidewalks. Suggest having an ongoing review of these potential hazards and a method of reporting.
- Consideration for a registry for persons with disabilities with the North Shore Emergency Management wherein people who may need extra help during an emergency can register.
- A question and concern was raised on how the comments/feedback will be communicated to Council particularly as there were no Councillors in attendance at the meeting.
- For the Bird Song path, there is a rock in the middle of the path but could be an impediment for the pathway particularly as a tripping hazard or for persons with sight disability.
- A suggestion was presented to keep curbside cut-outs at standard sizes instead of different heights.

As next steps, committee members were requested to provide feedback and/or comments by April 10th.

*Farinaz Havaei moved and Mehdi Mirzaee seconded:
That the feedback received is considered.*

CARRIED

8. Emerging Issues and Survey Update

The purpose of the survey is to obtain the committee's feedback and to collaboratively decide the committee's priorities for the next year for discussion during the Emerging Issues portion of meetings. One of the recommendations was creating a survey which was reviewed by the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee. In terms of the survey, the questions have been formatted as a ranking order so that committee members can rank their top three choices based on what should be the priority for discussion. Responses to the survey are completely anonymous.

As next steps, the link to the survey will be sent out on Friday, March 27th and committee members were requested to complete the survey by Friday, April 2nd.

9. Adjournment

*Moved, seconded and resolved
That the meeting be adjourned.*

Next Meeting:

- Thursday, April 30, at 5:30 p.m.

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