

ACCESSIBILITY WORKING GROUP MOTIONS

The Accessibility Working Group (AWG) was established in 2015 to provide lived experience recommendations and perspectives on City initiatives. Several motions have been developed or considered through the mandate of the AWG, some relate directly to content within the Accessibility Framework while others make reference to specific projects or barriers.

Nov 9, 2015

That Linda Bartram be nominated as Chair of the Accessibility Working Group for 6 months.

Working Group Vacancies:

That a notice to request new members be sent out by the second week of January with a deadline of a month (February 15th).

December 7, 2015

Johnson Street Bridge Project / Janion frontage:

It was moved by Jon Breen, seconded by Susan Gallagher, that AWG recommends the City acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that all access points and routes through the Johnson Street Bridge project be accessible to all.

Curb Cuts:

It was moved by Susan Gallagher, seconded by Jon Breen that truncated dome mats be installed on all new curb cuts, and that the City retrofit all existing 'no-lip' curb cuts on an immediate basis.

Council Request for \$250,000 to be allocated for accessibility each year:

It was moved by Jon Breen, seconded by Steve Bertrand that Council annually allocate \$250,000 for accessibility.

January 11, 2016

David Foster Harbour Pathway:

That Council direct staff to ensure accessibility best practices are incorporated into the project design.

April 4, 2016

Definition of a Disability:

That the AWG adopt this definition, “A physical, sensory, developmental or mental condition or a health problem that significantly restricts the performance of one or more of a person's daily life activities for a period longer than six months on a permanent, recurring or intermittent basis.”

On-Line Survey - The Accessibility Working Group (AWG) discussed the following:

That the City of Victoria conduct an online survey to determine the challenges people with disabilities face when accessing facilities, infrastructure, services and amenities within the City of Victoria.

Portable Ramps at Heritage Buildings – Update:

At the March meeting the AWG discussed drafting a letter to the DVBA regarding a potential partnership between the City of Victoria and the DVBA to fund accessibility upgrades of downtown businesses. Councillor Jeremy Loveday forwarded a draft letter for the AWG’s review and approval.

The AWG approved the draft letter going forward (attached).

Accessible Pedestrian Signals

That the Accessibility Working Group requests Council to undertake a review of the position statement of the Accessible Pedestrian Signals and make recommendations for implementation.

August 8, 2016

Human Resources to work on an Accessibility Framework and AWG role:

That Council direct the City of Victoria to utilize some of the Accessibility funds to contract an individual who’s mandate is to assist the AWG in identifying barriers for persons with disabilities with research and a survey, examining existing City accessibility policies and procedures, and to develop an accessibility framework with which future City initiatives are analyzed for accessibility; The AWG to participate in the selection of a suitable candidate and to work closely with the successful applicant as they carry out their mandate.

That Council consider appointing Robin Bayley to the Accessibility Working Group.

August 22, 2016

That City Council consider approving the allocation of funds from the Accessibility Working Group funds to immediately retrofit all no-lip curb cuts with truncated domes.

December 5, 2016

AWG Report to Council:

The AWG approved the final version of its report to Council with its priority recommendations to date. These related to:

- Hiring someone to develop an Accessibility Framework
- Developing a reasonable accommodation process for Recreation
- Implementing scent reduction and pet restriction policies
- Becoming a permanent committee and
- Annual funding for accessibility

Specifically, the recommendations were:

1. An individual be contracted/hired to work with the AWG in identifying barriers for persons with disabilities, examine existing City accessibility policies and procedures, make policy recommendations, develop an accessibility framework, and provide on- going staff training and support.
2. That Council instruct Recreation Services to research, develop, codify and publicize a robust disability accommodation process for recreation facilities and programs.
3. That scent reduction and pet restriction policies be developed and implemented for City Hall.
4. The Accessibility Working Group become a standing committee of City Council.
5. Accessibility funding be allocated annually.

Policy on reasonable accommodation policy and process:

That Council instruct Recreation Services to research, develop, codify and publicize a robust disability accommodation process for recreation facilities and programs.

This motion will be circulated via email and added to the report going to Council

2017

January 9

Barrier Buster Project Funding:

That the Accessibility Working Group give their support for a barrier buster application for the community centre repairs and upgrades at the Cook Street Village Centre. Carried

February 6

That Linda Bartram continue as the Chair of the AWG. Chris Dobbie seconded this motion.

AWG Resources:

That members of the public be sought to fill the other 5 positions on the Accessibility Working Group (to make 12 members total) through Legislative Services.

March 6

That the AWG change their support for the barrier buster grant project to the hearing loop installed at City Hall and the accessible pedestrian signal pilot project.

Accessible Facilities Checklist:

That the AWG accept this draft as the final working document for the AWG.

Proposed Statement of Commitment to create a Barrier-Free Victoria:

That the AWG accept this as the working document for the AWG.

The document:

Recommendation: That the City of Victoria endorse the following statement of commitment adopted by the Victoria Accessibility Working Group on March 6, 2017:

The City of Victoria values the contributions made by all its citizens and believes that diversity strengthens the community.

The City of Victoria recognizes the wealth of knowledge and lived experience of people with disabilities and their essential role in creating a barrier-free Victoria and thus, will include the viewpoint and needs of persons with disabilities in its decisions.

The City of Victoria is committed to building an inclusive society and providing an accessible environment in which all individuals have access to the City's services and programs in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

The City of Victoria's policies, practices and procedures will ensure barrier free access for persons with disabilities to City facilities and participation in programs and processes including accessible customer service, information and communication, employment, the built environment and transportation.

The City of Victoria will ensure that all city employees are aware of their role in facilitating accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The City of Victoria will continue to prevent barriers by supporting positive attitudes that address "ableism" - attitudes which devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities.

In working towards its goals under this Statement, the City of Victoria is committed to creating a barrier-free city by meeting the requirements of existing and future legislation and by its own policies and goals related to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to people with disabilities. To this end, all elected City officials and City employees have a role to play in meeting these goals.

April 3

Proclamation for Allergy Awareness:

That the Accessibility Working Group support a request to Council for proclamation for Food Allergy Awareness week from May 14 to 20, 2017.

July 17

Advisory Committee Governance:

The AWG requests the Clerk to include in his recommendations to Council regarding an Overarching Committee Policy, that committee meetings and business be accessible in forum, information and procedures, to make participation in this aspect of civic life accessible to all.

Issues List – urgent safety / health related items: Audible Signals and Crystal Pool

AWG recommends to Council that all audible signal installation requests made up to the end of 2016 should be included in the 2018 budget, that the current list of requested audible signals take priority over currently planned audible signal installations, and that funding could come from the Accessibility Reserve Fund if necessary.

September 11

Transit Stop Safety:

The AWG recommends that the sidewalk in front of Centennial Square be improved for wheelchair access to BC Transit.

AWG Committee Procedures:

That AWG adopt the internal policies and procedures circulated to AWG members on August 25, 2017 and that these be forwarded to Christine and appended to the September meeting minutes.

October 2

AWG Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

Motion to ask Council Liaisons to propose adoption of the Statement of Commitment approved by the AWG at the March 6, 2017 meeting with possibly of the following being added to the beginning of the document.

“Whereas the City of Victoria is a signatory to both the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination and the Vienna Declaration; and Whereas the City has committed to taking concrete action to identify, monitor, and proactively address forms of individualized and systemic racism and discrimination in the Victoria community; Whereas both these documents promote anti-discrimination of persons with disabilities; and Whereas the City

of Victoria is subject to the BC Human Rights Code which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability

Be it resolved that the City of Victoria endorse the following statement of commitment adopted by the Victoria Accessibility Working Group on March 6, 2017”

Accommodating allergies in Recreational Programs

That the AWG request recreation staff and the RIV to come to a future AWG meeting to discuss accommodation of people with disabilities, including allergies, in City recreation programs.

“Motion to recommend the City adopt a formal policy and guidance material regarding briefing Council on Accessibility impacts” and

“Motion for the AWG to recommend a representative on a dogs in parks committee”

November 6

Bike Lane pedestrian crossing safety

That signage be painted on the bike lane surface on either side of the marked crosswalks to the bus stops on Pandora reminding cyclists they need to stop, and if required, that the Accessibility Reserve funds be used for this project.

Accessibility Impacts Reporting

“Whereas a Committee of the Whole motion on January 26, 2017 directed staff to “Include accessibility impacts on all reports to Council”, and Council approved this, and

Whereas since that direction was given, numerous staff reports to Council have not contained any accessibility impact statement, have incorrectly stated that there were no accessibility impacts, did not fully report the concerns/recommendations made by AWG, or neither contained the results of serious accessibility analysis nor concrete plans for conducting consultation and analysis of accessibility implications, and

Whereas the AWG advises that the full breadth of disabilities be considered for all types of City decisions including policies, services, information and technology, as well as those for infrastructure and facilities, and

Whereas staff unfamiliar with accessibility issues can learn to conduct accessibility analysis if given the right tools, and

Whereas the AWG is now providing written reports to departments on accessibility implications of their initiatives, and

Whereas the AWG has the expertise and is willing to assist in the development of policy and guideline materials, and

Whereas further direction is needed from Council around its expectations for accessibility impact assessment reporting,

Be it resolved that:

The AWG recommends to Council that it direct Staff, in consultation with the AWG, to develop a policy and guidance material to implement Council's direction of January 26, 2017 that staff include Accessibility Impacts in all reports to Council."

New AWG members

Motion to ask Council to fully complement the number of members for AWG.

December 4

Motion to have Linda Bartram reconfirmed as Chair of the Accessibility Working Group until the end of 2018.

Motion arising from November 6, 2017 meeting of the Accessibility Working Group regarding accessibility impacts:

Dear Councillors Thornton-Joe and Loveday

"Whereas a Committee of the Whole motion on January 26, 2017 directed staff to "Include accessibility impacts on all reports to Council", and Council approved this, and

Whereas since that direction was given, numerous staff reports to Council have not contained any accessibility impact statement, have incorrectly stated that there were no accessibility impacts, did not fully report the concerns/recommendations made by AWG, or neither contained the results of serious accessibility analysis nor concrete plans for conducting consultation and analysis of accessibility implications, and

Whereas the AWG advises that the full breadth of disabilities be considered for all types of City decisions including policies, services, information and technology, as well as those for infrastructure and facilities, and

Whereas staff unfamiliar with accessibility issues can learn to conduct accessibility analysis if given the right tools, and

Whereas the AWG is now providing written reports to departments on accessibility implications of their initiatives, and

Whereas the AWG has the expertise and is willing to assist in the development of policy and guideline materials, and

Whereas further direction is needed from Council around its expectations for accessibility impact assessment reporting,

Be it resolved that:

The AWG recommends to Council that it direct Staff, in consultation with the AWG, to develop a policy and guidance material to implement Council's direction of January 26, 2017 that staff include Accessibility Impacts in all reports to Council."

2018

January 8

Sidewalk Modification/Retrofit at the bus stop by the Bay Centre.

AWG recommends that the sidewalk on the west side of Douglas adjacent to the Bay Centre be improved for wheelchair access to BC Transit.

February 5

Accessible AWG Meeting Venue

That staff undertake to find an accessible venue/meeting space that is accessible for all members and report back by the next meeting.

April 9

On-street and City Parkade Accessible Parking

The AWG recommends to Council that it direct staff to prepare a 2019 budget submission for a one-time expense for a consultant to undertake a comprehensive study of accessible parkade and street parking in the City of Victoria to develop recommendations for bringing spaces up to CSA Standard B651 or another equivalent standard and ensuring that their numbers and locations are adequate to meet existing need, recognizing that all designated spaces are not available for use at all times, and include plans for expansion to meet future needs. Recommendations may be in the form of a multi-year plan and include other options for increasing the supply of accessible parking for people with accessible parking permits who do not need additional space to enter and exit their vehicles.

July 9

Accessible meeting space for AWG meetings

That Council direct staff to take steps to create an accessible meeting space at City Hall.

August

Accessibility Primer

The Accessibility Working Group approves the document titled “Attending an Accessibility Working Group Meeting” of August 2018 and recommends that Council direct staff to distribute it to all departments in a timely manner and ensure that any staff or consultants attending AWG meetings are aware of its requirements.

Recommendations for City Managed Accessible Parking Improvements

That The “VRDC Parking Committee: Recommendations for City Managed Accessible Parking Improvement” report and recommendations be accepted and adopted, and put on the issues list.

September 10

Access to Council information and meetings:

That Council direct staff to research and plan to address barriers in the Council documents and webcasting service and system/page and report to Council on financial implications as part of the 2019 Financial Planning process. Such barriers include but may not be limited to: 1. Inaccessibility of webcasts to people with hearing impairments. 2. Unreliability of webcasts for people who cannot attend City Hall, 3. Navigation issues on the page for people using screen readers (very difficult to find and play the webcast or access documents associated with agenda items), and 4. Lack of process for people who cannot attend City Hall to address Council.

October 1

Balancing Accessibility Considerations With Pollinator Habitat

That Council direct staff to plan, scope, cost and look at options to resource a project for 2019 to consult, research, analyze and develop a long-term, phased plan and policies for addressing accessibility of the planted environment, to remove barriers for people with environmental disabilities, consistent with the accessibility objectives of the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.”

Accessible City Managed Parking

That Council direct staff, when reporting back to Council as part of Financial Plan with resource estimates for AWG recommendations, that staff consider combining the AWG's recommendations regarding conducting a parking study for City-provided parking, with the scope of the accessible parking study for privately-provided parking, to determine any efficiencies that might be gained.

APS/Audible Signals

That Council direct staff to develop and implement a plan to install APS/audible signals at all existing controlled intersections/crossings, to be completed by 2021 and that staff work with the AWG to determine priority intersections/crossings to be addressed each year. That the new standard be that APS or audible signals be installed whenever a new pedestrian signal is installed."

AWG Accessibility Survey

That Council direct staff to provide an estimate for the cost of completing analysis of the AWG Accessibility Survey which closed May 2017, on a priority basis, and report the results to the AWG and Council. The analysis should include theory-based quantitative analysis to help understand who said what and a summary of write-in responses, to aid in understanding the reasons behind tick box answers. The qualitative analysis should be done in a way that protects privacy of respondents (e.g., analyzed by an independent third party).

Accessibility of City Hall (scent reduction and pet restriction policies)

Council direct staff to include in criteria for making City Hall accessible, accessible artificial lighting, particularly in public areas.

Accessibility Impact Statements Policy and Guidance

That Council direct staff to consider and bring forward proposals and scenarios for providing ongoing operational funding for accessibility, consistent with the AWG recommendation of December 2016 that accessibility funding be allocated annually.

Further, the AWG recommends that one-time operational funding for 2019 be allocated, sufficient to address recommendations arising from the Accessibility Framework, with the highest priority activity being delivery of accessibility awareness training to staff and Council, consistent with recommendations from the Accessibility Framework consultant's pending training needs assessment.

December 3

Travel Expense Reimbursement

“AWG recommends that Council direct staff to reimburse reasonable transportation expenses for AWG members attending AWG meetings where those expenses are a direct result of the need for AWG meetings to be held at accessible City facilities which are not centrally located.”

Accessibility Working Group Terms of Reference

That Council be made aware that the AWG’s current Terms of Reference indicate they can only meet until the approval of the new Strategic Plan in 2018. Council may wish to take action and request legislative services take action to expedite the drafting of new terms of reference.

Sandwich Boards Enforcement

That the AWG request Council to direct staff to step up enforcement of the sandwich board provisions of the portable sign bylaw in the name of pedestrian safety.”

2019

March 4

Town Hall Meeting Topics

The AWG recommends that Council direct staff that one of the first quarterly Town Hall meetings be on the topic of improving accessibility, that food barriers to access not be introduced for this event, that the event be held in as accessible a forum as possible and with accessibility procedures and features.”

May 6, 2019

Songhees park Expansion

The AWG recommends that Council direct staff to make the Songhees Park Expansion a demonstration pilot for low allergen planting and to collaborate with experts and the AWG in development of the planting plan from the ground cover to trees.

June 3

Truncated Domes at mid-block crosswalks (Susan)

The AWG recommends that the City of Victoria follow the example of Saanich and other municipalities and install tactile dome markings and tactile strips at mid-block bus stops, as an example, stops along Yates St. between Douglas and Fernwood.

Paws in Parks

1. That Council include Accessibility Working Group representation on any Paws in Parks type committee, a planned action in the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan, and analyze and consider accessibility perspectives on all pet dog related initiatives such as off-leash areas.
2. That Council postpone considerations of any pet dog related initiatives until after this already-planned and inclusive review of pet dog policy is undertaken.

Accessible Voting

The AWG recommends to Council to direct staff to make civic elections as accessible as possible to persons with disabilities including, but not limited to, employing accessible voting machines and banning pet dogs from attending voting locations.

August 12

Verbal Staff Reports to COTW Regarding Accessibility

The AWG recommends that Council refrain from requesting or receiving any verbal-only staff reports, especially when it relates to matters of accessibility, as they are not accessible to all members of the AWG. And that the matter of Council information accessibility be referred to the Accessibility Framework project so the City adopts policies and procedures to ensure that public information provided in graphic or verbal format also be provided in agreed upon accessible alternative formats.

Wharf Street Bike Lane Public Education & Poster

Whereas the City did not consult with the Accessibility Working Group (AWG) regarding the Pandora bike lane during the design phase of the project; and

Whereas safety concerns of pedestrians with vision loss, crossing over the bike lane to the bus stops on Pandora were pointed out to the City prior to the opening of the bike lane but were not addressed; and

Whereas a Human Rights complaint has been launched by concerned pedestrians who are blind regarding this safety issue; and

Whereas the City did consult with the AWG regarding the design of the Fort Street bike lane and no new uncontrolled crossings were installed; and

Whereas the AWG chair was assured by Engineering at the then Cook Street bike lane public engagement session, that the Pandora design would not be repeated; and

Whereas the City did not consult with the AWG regarding the Wharf and Humboldt Street bike lanes; and

Whereas there are at least two places where pedestrians have to cross the bike lane on Wharf to reach an accessible pedestrian signal (foot of Yates and Fort Streets); and

Whereas persons with vision loss cannot see cyclists approaching the crossing or hear their approach as they would hear a vehicle; and

Whereas it has been observed by both pedestrians who are blind and City staff that cyclists do not stop for pedestrians waiting at a marked uncontrolled crossing; and

Whereas the onus is on the pedestrian to watch for when the crossing is clear at uncontrolled crossings; and

Whereas pedestrians who are blind have found it necessary to limit their travel on the bus on Pandora; and

Whereas pedestrians who are blind will now have to limit their travel to Wharf Street and activities in the Inner Harbour; and

Whereas to date, satisfactory mitigation measures have not been tested and implemented by the City to alleviate these safety concerns with the existing bike lanes; and

Whereas the City continues to install uncontrolled crossings of bike lanes regardless of AWG's continuing opposition

The AWG recommends to Council that they direct staff to put a moratorium on the installation of any further uncontrolled crossings over bike lanes until measures acceptable to pedestrians who are blind are put in place at the existing inaccessible crossings.

Accessible Voting

AWG recommends that Council direct staff to:

- Make an accessible voting machine available for the next municipal election or bi-election on polling day and that it be located at City Hall or another equally central polling location;
- Ensure that there is at least one polling station in a pet-free facility available to all voters on polling day and that the no-pet policy is enforced; and
- Widely publicize these accessibility options well in advance of polling day

October 7

The AWG recommends that Council direct staff to Enforce City bylaws on sidewalk cafes and portable signs (sandwich boards), to remove barriers to safe sidewalk use by pedestrians with disabilities.

The AWG recommends that Council direct staff to consider the implications of the City regulating businesses, which are granted the privilege of using the public domain for sidewalk cafes/patios, to be required to provide accessible access to the cafe/patio, and accessible seating.

December 2

The AWG recommends that Council direct staff to make the Songhees Park Expansion a demonstration pilot for low allergen planting and to collaborate with experts and the AWG in development of the planting plan from the ground cover to trees.