



## MINUTES OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
LANGLEY CITY HALL  
20399 Douglas Crescent

October 3, 2024  
AT 4:30 P.M.

Present: Councillor Delaney Mack, Chair  
Councillor Rosemary Wallace, Vice-Chair  
Zosia Ettenberg, Representative of a Person with Disabilities  
Kirsten McKitterick, Representative of a Person with Disabilities  
Kim Bucholtz, Inclusion Langley Representative  
Anthony Ormrod, Representative of a Person with Disabilities  
Ron Bergen, Senior Representative  
Diane Sugars, Member Representing Indigenous People

Staff: Kim Hilton, Director of Recreation, Culture & Community Services  
Michele Payne, Recreation Supervisor

Regrets: Wendy Rachwalski, Member at Large  
Jaclyn Edwards, Member at Large  
Beckett Zeller, Manager of Human Resources

Guest: Suzanne Perreault

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The Chair began by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is on the traditional unceded territory of the Katzie, Kwantlen, Matsqui and Semiahmoo First Nations.

### 1. **AGENDA**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the October 3, 2024 agenda be adopted as amended to switch the order of Item 4.a to Item 4.c, and add “Langley City Connects Open House Information” as Item 5.b.

**CARRIED**

## **2. MINUTES**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the September 5, 2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee minutes be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

## **3. PRESENTATION**

Suzanne Perreault is an advocate for inclusion, a counsellor and parent of 3 autistic children who are now all young adults. Suzanne is the Executive Director for Autism BC and has a lengthy history of community service including DPAC for the Langley School District for six years, and a Langley School Trustee for 4 years. Ms. Perreault began her journey as an advocate for her children.

Ms. Perreault declared that inclusion and diversity are fluid conversations. Social norms, perceptions and opportunities for diversity and inclusion are dynamic and nuanced. Often, spectrum diagnoses are thought of in a linear fashion for neurodivergent learners which can lead to unfair comparisons of experience. It is important to pay attention to the person and offer agency.

Ms. Perreault provided a simplified explanation on the difference between neurodivergent and neurodiversity.

A neurodivergent person is born that way, and their brain processes information in a way that is not typical of most individuals. A neurodivergent person could be autistic, have ADHD, or another learning disorder.

A neurotypical person is someone that does not display or have any atypical patterns of thought or behavior. i.e. they have no learning disabilities.

Neurodiversity is a broader concept that recognizes and values the diversity of neurological conditions and experiences. It promotes the idea that neurological variations should be accepted as part of human diversity rather than viewed solely as disorders or deficits.

Understanding the language is very important to support and uphold the rights of those with disabilities.

Mr. Bergen entered at 4:57pm

Ms. Ettenberg asked what we can do to encourage inclusion.

Ms. Perreault replied that it is important to be resolved in ensuring that the wording in our policies and communications is carefully chosen. Do not use terms such as diverse abilities as some people find that disempowering. It is important to remember that how we use language can lead to micro aggressions, that can then lead to real aggressions to those with neurodivergent disabilities. Include neurodivergent individuals in the planning and decision-making process.

The Provincial Accessibility Committee is currently working on draft recommendations for new accessibility standards. The standards are meant to identify and remove barriers to accessing employment and accessing services from provincially regulated organizations. This feedback will help shape the recommended accessibility standards that will be sent to the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) in 2025. The standards will also inform future accessibility regulations in B.C.

Ensuring a sensory friendly environment. Implement design standards that accommodate a range of needs and abilities.

For example, having a safe space and building confidence is important to those with neurodivergent disabilities. Ms. McKitterick stated that the day program she participants in has a safe space that they can go in case they need a break from others or the environment.

We should consider sensory-friendly environments in our facilities that can be available to those who would benefit and can be accessed with agency which is defined as: *the sense of control that you feel in your life, your capacity to influence your own thoughts and behavior, and have faith in your ability to handle a wide range of tasks and situations*. The upcoming audit will consider what safe spaces are available in our community and Langley City facilities, and how we can make people feel comfortable in our spaces. Include neurodivergent individuals in planning and decision-making processes.

It was discussed that the environment needs to be considered such as be aware of sensory overload (noisy community centres), lighting that cannot be adjusted or is too bright, sound, scent, space for wheelchairs. Are we making sure the space is scent free, or do we have earplugs available for those who need help managing the noise? It was noted that it is also important for people to regulate themselves, prepare for the environment and be a self-advocate.

Ms. Perreault encouraged us to have flexible policies with accommodating rules. For example, the easy way to make the CKF Room accessible is to change the lighting from bright light to soft white and put covers over the lights, have an accessible door, and change the set-up of the tables and chairs.

Other suggestions are having ongoing anonymous feedback policies, offering hybrid work arrangements, making the workspace flexible for staff: adjustable blinds, lighting, white noise, flexible seating options.

Also making sure our signage is correct, and consider the use of colours, scent, and touch. Consider how we can integrate technology into our standards and update and review policies frequently; policies that were written 20 years ago and not up to the standards of today.

Race and Disabilities Canada has good policies that can be researched.

Ms. Perreault noted that our survey question 5 “How would you rate the accessibility of public transportation” is an example of how language matters. She asked us to consider what we are asking for in this question, if we are not considering the ease of getting to the bus stop, if there is a ramp on the bus, if it is a sheltered or non-sheltered bus stop, and if there is any lighting.

It was discussed that the covered bus stops are not owned and operated by Translink, and trying to have them address the need for more shelters, and/or to accommodate those with physical disabilities is futile. For example, the covered shelters have benches that span the length of the shelter leaving no room for those who are physically disabled to seek shelter. This is an example of how we can write our policies to ensure that our community partners are required to follow our requirements for accessibility and inclusion.

**Action:** Staff to find out who owns the land that the bus stops are on and will report back.

It was suggested that it would be great for our committee to build an accessible bus stop as an example of accessibility and inclusion.

Ms. Perreault exited at 5:40pm

#### **4. STANDING ITEMS**

- a) Accessibility Audit Subcommittee: deferred to the next meeting.
- b) Accessibility Advisory Survey Subcommittee. Committee members reviewed the updated survey and made the following suggestions:
  - Include Neurodivergent in the introduction.
  - Question 5: How do you rate the accessibility of public transportation within the City of Langley? Change to: “Do you find any barriers to accessible public transportation? If yes, please explain.
  - Add Question 15: Do you have a hard time navigating any City spaces? Please select all that apply: Physically – Emotionally. Please explain.
  - Add Question 16: Do you find any City spaces overstimulating? If yes, please explain how you manage the space.

The committee discussed whether any additional changes are required and decided that once we receive the responses we can determine if we need to gather more information.

Paper copies of the survey can be distributed at the upcoming Langley City Connects Open Houses. Committee members discussed having several specific questions at the Open Houses when people can post their responses.

**ACTION:** Staff to investigate having an online survey available and will report back.

- c) 2024 Accessibility Advisory Workplan. The Chair addressed initiatives that keep popping up that are not in the work plan. Initiatives need to be incorporated into our workplan to keep the committee on track, and to develop action items.
- HandyDART and transit for seniors: can be included in transportation.
  - Accessible apartments:
  - Promotion of the committee:
  - Indigenous consultation:

Are there any other initiatives that the committee would like to be considered, and what is the priority?

- Ms. Bucholtz: accessible and affordable housing is a priority.
- Ms. McKitterick: transportation advocacy (accessible bus stops).
- Ms. Ettenberg: accessible housing for people with physical disabilities (not adaptable). Advocacy for priority trips to and from Vancouver to access medical care that is not available South of the Fraser.
- Mr. Ormrod: Advocating for those with additional needs and agency over the decisions. Advocacy for retrofitting space for changing life situations.
- Mr. Bergen: transportation – safe and reliable advocacy for people with all abilities. Making transit an essential service.
- Ms. Sugars: DRIPA focus group on accessibility with Indigenous Peoples.

**ACTION:** Ms. Sugars and Ms. Hilton to meet and discuss.

## **5. FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION**

- a) Accessible rental apartments: regular and adaptable. To be discussed as part of our work plan discussion at the next meeting.
- b) Langley City Connects Open Houses. Langley City will be hosting community Open Houses and committee members are invited to attend, man a booth and connect with the community about the committee and the work that is being done.

The time is 6pm to 8pm on the following dates:

- Oct 17 Simonds Elementary School: Ms. Bucholtz; Ms. McKitterick and Ms. Sugars
- Oct 22 Nicomekl Elementary School: Ms. Ettenberg and Mr. Bergen
- Oct 23 Coast Convention Centre

Committee members requested self-addressed stamped envelopes for the survey if possible.

## **6. ROUNDTABLE**

The Chair advised that universal washrooms will be integrated into the SkyTrain station.

Ms. Bucholtz is retiring on November 7<sup>th</sup> and will no longer be attending the meetings.

Mr. Bergen is concerned about the new building code for buildings up to 6 floors that will allow the removal of a second egress or exit stairwell per floor and would like the committee to put pressure on this issue.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

It was MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the meeting adjourns at 6:41pm.

CARRIED

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CHAIR

Certified Correct:  
*mlp*

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RECREATION SUPERVISOR