



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: September 24, 2025
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Meeting Date: October 29, 2025
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TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services
SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to the Terms of Reference of the Accessibility Committee

Recommendations

THAT Council approve the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Accessibility Committee as outlined in Appendix B.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report proposes minor updates to the Terms of Reference of the City's Accessibility Committee.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

- On [July 9, 2024](#), Council received an update on Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy, along with its Multi-Year Action Plan (RTS 015313).
- On [October 3, 2023](#), Council approved the designation and remuneration for the Accessibility Committee (RTS 15926).
- On [April 25, 2023](#), Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Committee, as required by the Accessible BC Act (RTS 15599).
- On [July 19, 2022](#), Council approved the Accessibility Strategy – Phase 1 (RTS 14734).

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The Accessibility Committee was established by Council in October 2023 in response to requirements of the Accessible BC Act (“the Act”) which came into legislation in 2021. The Act requires prescribed organizations to develop: (a) an accessibility committee; (b) an accessibility plan; and (c) a public feedback mechanism. The City has successfully implemented all three requirements and is compliant with the Act.

A summary of the Accessibility Committee's history, structure and relationship to the City's Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC) can be found in Appendix A.

As the Accessibility Committee has now operated for two years, staff have had the opportunity to evaluate the function and operation of the Committee. Based on this assessment as well as consultation with Accessibility Committee members, staff are proposing minor amendments to the Committee's Council-approved Terms of Reference.

Discussion

Staff recommend three (3) changes to the Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference:

- Revising the purpose statement to better reflect the Committee's function;
- Revising the mandate statement to accurately reflect the legislative provision under which the Committee is created; and,
- Extending the membership term from two (2) to four (4) years.

See Appendix B to view the Terms of Reference with the proposed changes.

Purpose of the Accessibility Committee

Reflecting its legislative requirements, the Accessibility Committee is a key mechanism to maintain accountability in increasing accessibility. The Committee provided advice in the development of the Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP) of the Accessibility Strategy and currently monitors and provides feedback to inform the implementation of the MYAP. Further, the Committee provides guidance and input regarding concerns received through the public feedback mechanism, to help inform improvements.

The current purpose statement in the Committee's Terms of Reference is as follows:

- “To support the City of Vancouver in identifying barriers to accessibility and provide the City with advice on how to prevent and remove those barriers.”¹

Staff propose amending the purpose statement to better reflect the Accessibility Committee's function and make reference to the legislative basis of the Committee. An amended purpose statement would also differentiate the role of the Accessibility Committee with that of PDAC, which more broadly advises Council on improving access, inclusion, and participation in City services and civic life for persons with disabilities.

¹ This original statement directly cites phrasing from the Accessible BC Act, Part 3 Section 9(1).

Staff recommend amending the Terms of Reference purpose statement as follows:

- “The purpose of the Committee is to provide staff advice to inform the implementation of the City’s accessibility plan and the public feedback mechanism, required under the Accessible BC Act.”

Mandate of the Accessibility Committee

The current mandate statement in the Committee's Terms of Reference is:

- “The City of Vancouver’s Accessibility Committee (‘the Committee’) is established pursuant to section 10 of the Accessible British Columbia Act (‘the Act’). The Committee must act in accordance with the Act and any applicable Regulations.”

The legislative provision reference in the current mandate requires updating, as shown in the Terms of Reference in Appendix B.

Term of the Accessibility Committee

The final proposed amendment would extend the term of service for Committee members, from two (2) to four (4) years. This will ensure a continued staggered intake of members, provide continuity overall, and increase administrative efficiency relating to recruiting, selecting and onboarding members.

Staff have designed a low barrier application process that enables diversity of the committee. Once appointed to the Committee, members have been deeply engaged and supportive of the work. Maintaining continuity of the Committee is advantageous for the implementation of the MYAP, as it enables effective feedback on implementation of complex actions with longer implementation periods. Committee members will also be more knowledgeable and better able to support the City’s ongoing commitment to advancing accessibility. Staff have confirmed with current Committee members that the proposed extended term is viewed as beneficial. Members can step down at any time if they are unable to fulfill their term.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report’s recommendations.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report’s recommendations.

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APPENDIX A

Summary of Committees:

Accessibility Committee (the “Committee”), Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC), and Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC)

The City’s Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC), Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC), and Accessibility Committee play distinct roles in service planning and delivery in Vancouver.

When Council approved the designation and remuneration of the Accessibility Committee in October 2023 (RTS 15926), the functions of these related committees were queried as there appeared to be overlapping purposes. Staff were directed to report back before the next call for Accessibility Committee members opened. Currently, the next scheduled intake for Accessibility members is planned for November 2025.

Accessibility Committee

The Accessibility Committee is a Type C² civic agency. This type of civic agency makes recommendations to Council and staff on matters related to development, operations, planning, and/or zoning, and are governed by their own distinct bylaws and/or provincial statutes.

The Accessibility Committee was established in October 2023, as a requirement of the Accessible BC Act (“the Act”) that came into legislation in 2021. Further to the legislation, and as a Type C committee, its purpose is to consult and provide advice towards the implementation of the City’s Accessibility plan and public feedback mechanism. This includes providing advice to staff on the implementation of the Accessibility Strategy’s Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP) (2024-2026).

The composition of the Accessibility Committee reflects its purpose. The Act stipulates that the majority of committee members identify as having a disability and/or are individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities, and that there be at least one Indigenous person on the committee. In addition to the 11 volunteer members from the disability community, there are six staff on the Committee, representing departments that have significant areas of work implementing the Accessibility Strategy’s MYAP, including Real Estate and Facility Management (REFM), Engineering, Civic Engagement and Communications (CEC), Human Resources, and Planning Urban Design and Sustainability (PDS).

Two of the community members serving on the Accessibility Committee also serve on PDAC and OPEAC, and play a liaison role between the three committees.

² Type C Committees are legislated and/or planning-oriented committees.

Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC)

The mandate of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) is to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for persons with disabilities to fully participate in City services and civic life.

The mandate of the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC) is to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for older persons and elders to fully participate in City services and civic life.

The earliest iterations of PDAC and OPEAC date back to 1991.

As designated Type A³ civic agencies (Council Advisory Committees), PDAC and OPEAC make recommendations to Council in alignment with Council-identified strategic priorities related to equity-denied communities. These two committees provide community members with a means to share perspectives, experiences, concerns and ideas with Council, with each committee representing a particular demographic, i.e., persons with disabilities, and older persons, respectively.

Each committee involves up to 12 community members, up to two non-voting Council liaisons, and up to two non-voting staff liaisons. Community members are appointed by Council for a two-year term and can serve up to eight consecutive years on the same committee. These committees can also have a non-voting liaison from the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Vancouver School Board Trustee liaison, Vancouver Public Library staff liaison, and Vancouver Police Department.

Summary

The Accessibility Committee serves a distinct purpose for the City. It is established to meet a legislative mandate, and it is focused on providing advice and guidance to staff on the implementation of the Accessibility Strategy and public feedback mechanism. As such, the Committee engages staff representing the key departments which play significant roles in accomplishing and monitoring the actions in the multi-year action plan.

By contrast, PDAC and OPEAC each serve a broader purpose of engagement and inclusion related to the experiences of persons with disabilities, and older persons, respectively.

In assessing the purpose and scope of these three committees, staff met or corresponded with the Accessibility Committee (February 25, 2025), PDAC (June 12, 2025), and OPEAC (July 31, 2025) about the current structure and mandates of the respective committees. Overall, members across the three committees support retaining the current structures and emphasized their continued relevance.

³Type A Committees provide advice to Council.

APPENDIX B

Proposed Revised Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Committee

Objective (Purpose)	<u>CURRENT:</u> The purpose of the Committee is to support the City of Vancouver in identifying barriers to accessibility and provide the City with advice on how to prevent and remove those barriers. <u>PROPOSED NEW:</u> <i>The purpose of the Committee is to provide staff advice to inform the implementation of the City's accessibility plan and the public feedback mechanism, required by the Accessible BC Act.</i>
Mandate	<u>CURRENT:</u> The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Committee ('the Committee') is established pursuant to section 10 of the Accessible British Columbia Act ('the Act'). The Committee must act in accordance with the Act and any applicable Regulations. <u>PROPOSED NEW:</u> <i>The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Committee ('the Committee') is established pursuant to section 9 of the Accessible British Columbia Act ('the Act') and fulfills the mandate required by section 9(1) of the Act. The Committee must act in accordance with the Act and any applicable Regulations.</i>
Responsibilities	• Provide guidance and advice on the development of the City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy and its renewal; • Help with the development of a public feedback mechanism to identify accessibility barriers, in relation to the Accessibility Strategy, and provide advice to the City on how to remove or prevent barriers; • Embed an accessibility lens on matters such as policy, by-laws and planning decisions and encourage other City departments to apply this lens; • Review and provide feedback on 3-year Accessibility Strategy departmental action plans; and • Review and provide feedback on Accessibility Strategy annual progress reports by departments, including monitoring progress and timelines, and providing recommendations on priorities.
Committee Membership	There will be a total of 16 committee members. The Committee will be comprised of a mix of eleven (11) community members with lived experience and five (5) non-voting City staff to allow for public accountability, and direct communication and feedback. Public membership to the Committee (11) is limited to people with lived experience of disability, and representatives from organizations who provide services to, or support, people with lived experience of disability. The majority of the Committee's public membership will be comprised of people with lived experience. There will be at least two (2) people from

	Indigenous communities, and at least two (2) youths with disabilities on the committee. There will be a representative from the Persons with Disability Advisory Committee and the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee. The public membership will be selected through a low-barrier, open application process. Due to the limited space, it is acknowledged that the committee will not be representative of the full spectrum of disabilities. Those with experiences of disability that intersect with historically underserved and inequitably treated groups, such as Indigenous Peoples, racialized people, 2SLGBTQ+ people, seniors and youth, will be prioritized. Members are expected to represent and advocate for themselves as well as the wider disability communities to the greatest extent possible. Members must be based in, or serve, communities in Vancouver. City staff representing different departments will be appointed to the Committee by General Managers to serve as non-voting members. Representation of departments will be determined by the pertinence of their role in implementing the Accessibility Strategy.
Code of Conduct	All members of the committee (voting and non-voting) are expected to: • Agree to operate in accordance with the Terms of Reference. • Maintain and respect the confidentiality of all committee members. This includes meetings, correspondence, email, among others. • At all times, treat each other with respect and courtesy. • Respect the opinions of everyone– agree to disagree. • Commit to the principle of building on and leveraging existing community assets, capacities and networks, and participate fully in designing operating agreements at the first meeting. • Ensure the Accessibility Committee is a safe space of mutual respect and transparency to discuss issues and solutions, work constructively and collaboratively with all members. • Perform their roles and responsibilities to the best of their ability. • Maintain open communication about the work of the Accessibility Committee. In the event that a member of the Accessibility Committee does not comply with the Code of Conduct as set out above, the member may be asked to leave.
Meetings	The Accessibility Committee will meet six (6) times per year. Additional meeting(s) may be convened as needed, and smaller working groups to assist with the work may also be formed. Meeting minutes and materials will be distributed prior to each meeting. All committee members will participate in as many meetings as possible during their term. It is anticipated that each meeting will be approximately 2 hours in length. Meetings may be held in person, virtually, or in a hybrid model.

	Members (voting and non-voting) may not send substitutes to meetings. If a member misses two consecutive meetings, the Committee's support staff will reach out to inquire about their absences.
Terms	<u>CURRENT:</u> Committee members are committed to a two (2) year term with the option of renewing their term for another two (2) years only. Terms will be staggered to ensure continuity in the work of accessibility within the City. <u>PROPOSED NEW:</u> • <i>Committee members are committed to a four (4) year term with the option of renewing their term for another four (4) years. Terms will be staggered to ensure continuity in the work of accessibility within the City.</i> • <i>Committee members can renew their term once only. Should committee members be unable to fulfill their term commitment they are asked to notify the Accessibility Planner as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements.</i>
Voting	Should there be a recommendation that needs to be made, Committee members representing the public will have voting privileges. Staff will be non-voting members. For any recommendations to be made, the preferred model for decision-making is consensus between the committee members. However, if consensus cannot be achieved, then the Chief Equity Officer may exercise the deciding vote. Ultimately, the responsibility of this committee falls under the City, aligning with the BC Accessibility Legislation.
Accessible Participation	The City will ensure that all members can fully participate in the Committee. Funding will be provided for voting members who have specific access needs, including support or reimbursements for transportation, interpreters, technical equipment, or other resources deemed necessary for full participation.
Honoraria	Remuneration is available for voting members of the Committee who request financial support. Members will receive an honorarium (cheque) of \$125 per hour for each meeting attended. Honorariums for voting members who serve on the Committee as representatives of organizations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
Staff Support	The Accessibility Planner will convene the Accessibility Committee and coordinate the logistics of the meetings. This may include identifying meeting times and dates, taking minutes, booking appropriate meeting spaces as needed, facilitating technology solutions, and other forms of accommodation, to allow for full participation by members, and attending to any other administrative tasks to ensure the smooth running of the Committee.

Reporting to	As a Type D Civic Agency (Task Force), the Committee reports to the Mayor in his/her/their Chief Executive Officer of the City. Committee reports and recommendations are conveyed to Mayor and Council via the Chief Equity Officer and/or General Manager, Arts, Culture, and Community Services.
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