



Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee (WAAC)

Meeting held March 13, 2025

A meeting of the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee is held this day commencing at 10:00 o'clock a.m. via Zoom video conference, there being present the following members:

Sally Bennett Olczak, Co-Chair
Peter Best, Co-Chair
Councillor Fred Francis
Danica McPhee
Nicholas Petro
Caleb Ray

Absent:

Riccardo Pappini
Surendra Bagga

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Mark Keeler, Accessibility/Diversity Officer
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 10:01 o'clock a.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A, attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. Conflict of Interest

None disclosed.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by Nicholas Petro, seconded by Councillor Fred Francis,
That the minutes of the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee of its meeting held December 3, 2024 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

4. Business items

4.1 Hidden Disabilities Sunflower – Update

Mark Keeler advises that it was hoped that the City of Windsor would be the first municipality in Ontario to partner with the Sunflower Program – Creating Support for Hidden Disabilities. It appears that Ajax, Ontario is the first municipality that will participate in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program. A report regarding this Program will be sent to the Community Services Standing Committee and City Council for approval.

4.2 Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee Communications Changes

Mark Keeler states that discussions have been held with 311 and advises that he is now able to see and respond to the service requests in real time that deal with accessibility issues. He explains they will now get a sense of the composition of those complaints and what we are hearing from other residents that are not related to Transit Windsor issues. He adds he will report back at the next meeting of WAAC.

Danica McPhee remarks that in the past there were only a few accessibility complaints coming for Transit Windsor and asks Mark Keeler if this is correct. Mark Keeler responds that he receives on average 3 to 4 complaints daily of which 1 or 2 relate to accessibility issues. He notes there have been drivers' issues where the driver has been rude or disrespectful to people with disabilities and a supervisor has been sent to speak to the driver within the next day.

Peter Best indicates that part of his objectives for 2025 is to include communications from the various departments, i.e. Transit Windsor.

Councillor Fred Francis advises that if there are issues where departments are not responsive, he asks that he be contacted with this information.

In response to a question asked by Nicholas Petro regarding whether Administration has been looped into the 311 system, Mark Keeler responds that the programmer in 311 has to code him into their system.

4.3 Transit Windsor

Mark Keeler provides the following comments relating to Transit Windsor:

- There are several areas that are critical to Administration and to WAAC.
- One of the areas to look at is the transit schedules as they are not accessible. Had meetings with Transit's Planning and Marketing Departments on ways to improve the accessibility. He adds he may have to remediate their transit schedules.
- There are legislative requirements that demand that the schedules be compliant.
- When Transit was under Federal regulatory authority, due to the loss of the tunnel bus, will soon transition Transit Windsor over to the AODA as now under Provincial authority.
- In terms of the CNIB and complaints received, Mark Keeler advises that a communication is now being sent to all the accessibility groups on how to do a complaint that can be done on a screen reader.

Danica McPhee refers to those enhancements to the complaint process and asks if we will be engaging the community in what that needs to look like or is there a vision. Mark Keeler responds that it will be a case of beginning to build a rapport relationship which will go out to all the groups.

Moved by Councillor Fred Francis, seconded by Nicholas Petro,
That the updates provided by the Diversity and Accessibility Officer regarding matters relating to Transit Windsor **BE RECEIVED** .
Carried.

4.4 Communications

This matter was discussed in Item 4.2

4.5 Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS)

Mark Keeler advises that he is meeting with Administration from the various departments regarding the new FADS document for the City of Windsor. He wants to ensure that the departments are aware of the new FADS and that resources will be allocated. Sally Bennett Olczak, Co-Chair asks if there is a timeline project plan for the implementation of the FADS. Mark Keeler responds that Windsor is the only city that has an Accessibility Officer as the lead on this project. It is generally overseen by building, infrastructure or through the CAO's Office. He cautions there may be some pushback on dimensions and recommendations. Councillor Fred Francis responds that the timeline will be factored into the next few years. He advises that before it goes to Council, Administration is absorbing all the recommendations and will be phasing it into the 10-year capital plan, so may look at a 10-year window on how many of these

recommendations will make it into projects. He states that the budget will be tens of millions of dollars of recommendations. The goal is and the win is to get it a part of the regular process of thinking with our 10-year capital project budget and get the decision makers on the administrative side to advise how to facilitate it over the 10-year capital budget.

In response to a question asked by Mark Keeler to Councillor Fred Francis, he asks if he sees departments and the Administration reviewing this and then bringing the standard itself to Council next year or will it continually be evolving. Councillor Fred Francis responds that this will be absorbed within the different departments. Eventually, these recommendations will make it into the 10 Year Capital and will then be overseen by Engineering, Corporate Services, and Economic Development.

Peter Best advises that the role of WAAC is to help Administration and Engineers to understand why WAAC made various decisions outlined in their proposal for FADS. Mark Keeler concurs and adds that WAAC should be at that table with those engineers and architects.

4.6 Infrastructure Group

Peter Best, Co-Chair provides the following comments:

- In terms of the Infrastructure Group, it is important to communicate with Administration.
- WAAC is interested in helping the community express their concerns.
- Suggests putting a contact on the City of Windsor's webpage to allow the public to voice their issues.
- Wants to review the list of concerns/issues and to determine the priorities.
- Interested in sending a communication to the city's departments to encourage them to work with WAAC to help make Windsor barrier free.

Mark Keeler remarks that as this is an AODA year, he suggests speaking to the departments that are mostly impacted by accessibility.

4.7 Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) Conference

Sally Bennett Olczak, Co-chair asks if the Accountability for Affected People (AAP) colleagues in the County are able to attend the ONAP Conference or is this exclusive to public administrators. Mark Keeler responds that their Terms of Reference prohibit anyone from attending other than the Officers. He further proposes the idea of bringing Accessibility Advisory Committees (AAC's) together from other communities to attend a summit or a webinar in the future.

Nicholas Petro questions if there is a venue for the ONAP Conference as WAAC members could assist in doing a run through of the area to ensure it is accessible. Danica McPhee concurs as WAAC would have “eyes” on some barriers. Mark Keeler responds that there are several members on ONAP with disabilities who can ensure the area is accessible. He remarks that a walkthrough by WAAC can be coordinated if there are members who wish to assist.

5. WAAC 2025 Operating and Capital Budgets

Sally Bennett Olczak, Co-chair advises that the 2025 Operating Budget is \$10,000 (which includes a carry forward from 2024). She adds there is approximately \$450,000 in the Capital Budget. She suggests that discussion regarding the use of the funds be held at the subcommittee meetings rather than at the end of the year.

Mark Keeler remarks there are no asks for projects from the Capital Fund currently.

6. New Business

Mark Keeler indicates that a complaint was received from a resident regarding the retaining wall at the Budimir Library Branch. There is a standard ramp with guardrails and a retaining wall roughly five feet tall. The resident expresses security concerns that someone may be hiding behind the retaining wall. Mark Keeler notes that he took measurements to ensure that the landing ramp is compliant. There is nothing in the FADS that prevents a retaining wall and adds that a report will be provided to the subcommittee for review.

Mark Keeler provides an overview of a different complaint by the same resident that relates to a utility pole at the corner of Curry and Grand Marais Roads. There is a push button located 4-5 feet from the utility pole and the resident has complained that the distance to the pole is inaccessible. He states there is no way that a person with a visual disability or a person in a wheelchair is safe as there is a tripping hazard. He notes that the Executive Director of Operations is aware of this and are working with a road crew from Traffic to lay a new concrete pad. A report from the subcommittee will be attached to the Service Request. Councillor Francis suggests providing this information to Councillor Jim Morrison who is the Ward Councillor.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on a date to be determined in May 2025.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 11:07 o'clock a.m.