

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, September 28, 2016

Burgoyne Woods Room at 1:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Shelley Stewart, Co-chairperson
Diane Foster, Co-chairperson
Bob Asham
Steve Byers
Stacey Headey-Komenda
Tracey Hrick
Julie Morris
Linda Marie O'Hagan
David Reed
Mary Jane Waszynski

Absent:

Ian Crawford

Staff Representatives:

CAO's office; Diana Lecinski
TES; Anthony Martuccio, Vince Covatta, Steve Bittner
PRCS; Stuart Green

Guests:

Harald Ensslen, Macdonald, Zuberec, Ensslen, Architects Inc.

1. **Call meeting to order**

Shelley Stewart called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
Round-table introductions were made.

2. **Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting**

Wednesday, June 22, 2016

Moved by: Bob Asham

Seconded by: Linda Marie O'Hagan

That the Minutes of June 22, 2016 be approved.

CARRIED

3. **Presentations/Discussions:**

a. Lakeside Park design;

- Anthony Martuccio, Facilities Eng. TES and
Harald Ensslen, Macdonald, Zuberec, Ensslen, Architects Inc.

Designs were reviewed in detail by Harald Ensslen. He provided specifics on the park exterior paths of travel, connectivity and various elements from parking and pedestrian access areas through to the caroursel, bandshell, playground, proposed sun shelter at the Mobi-mat area, pavilions. The members noted the importance of clear, intuitive and barrier-free paths for pedestrians throughout the park. They noted that elements such as benches and refuse containers should be located on pedestrian paths and not across soft grass surfaces.

There will be a full interior FADS renovation to the snackbar/washroom/changeroom building which will include 2 universal accessible family washrooms. As with previous exterior park washroom designs the washroom entry will be locked in the open position during park hours and closed at night. The universal washrooms will be equipped with power door operators. Members of the AAC asked for clarification on interior/exterior lighting, interior finishes and stall design.

The membership was supportive of the overall Lakeside Park design. Shelley

Stewart thanked Harald Ensslen and Anthony Martuccio for the accessible and inclusive design of Lakeside Park and asked to be kept informed of changes and as the project details move forward.

- b. Westpark washroom design;
 - Vince Covatta, Design Eng. TES, Stuart Green, Landscape Design, PRCSVince Covatta reviewed the overall sports park design which will consist of a playground, adult exercise equipment, splash-pad and a new washroom/changeroom facility. The facility design will follow FADS. Members noted the importance of universal washrooms in future park facility designs. Members noted the importance of pedestrian connectivity within the park as well as to parking, roadway sidewalks and bus stops. Staff noted that there are 2 parking lots serving this site, 1 of which has a bus stop nearby. Parking lots and municipal sidewalks are not part of the scope of the park design process although staff noted future plans for the parking lot to be upgraded. The AAC also noted that the existing parking is not very accessible and that accessible parking spaces and pedestrian paths need updating and connectivity as well.
- c. Downtown Streetscape, St. Paul @ Carlisle;
 - Steve Bittner, Transportation TESMembers of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) reviewed the draft proposal for the removal of traffic lights at the intersection of St. Paul Street and Carlisle Street. This is a busy intersection that has both increased pedestrian traffic and increased vehicular traffic during the many and frequent public events in the area. The unanimous consensus was the danger that all pedestrians would be exposed to in crossing this major and connective intersection if it was a 4-way stop.

Removal of the traffic lights would result in the lack of timed opportunity for a clear pedestrian crossing which was considered a large safety concern for pedestrians. Pedestrians with a vision disability depend highly on traffic signals, particularly with audio signals, to halt vehicles in order to cross an intersection safely. As stated in the CNIB's *Clearing our Path, Universal Design recommendations for people with vision loss* document; "an accessible pedestrian signal (APS) provides auditory, visual, and tactile information so that a person with vision and/or hearing loss will know when it is legal (i.e. when the walk phase begins) to cross at a set of traffic signals".

People who use a mobility device travel at level lower than drivers tend to look for in pedestrians crossing the road, and are therefore compromised in safety when drivers stop, look left and right, then proceed. People with a developmental, learning, or mental health disability depend on the traffic signal

indicators to cross safely, without the need to identify a specific opportunity if crossing at a busy 4-way stop. Older adults are a mandated perspective under the AAC's terms of reference and the AAC noted that it may take longer for an older adult to traverse an intersection which is also a safety concern when drivers at a 4-way stop tend to stop and then proceed as soon as possible.

The intersection of St. Paul and Carlisle Streets is not only at the apex of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, it is very close to a major sports and event venue being the Meridian Centre, as well as the Carlisle Street Parking Garage which has more than 600 vehicle parking spaces, and the downtown bus terminal has almost 700 public and private bus trips through this intersection daily. Given the size of buses, they may further diminish a pedestrian's hearing and site-line of other on-coming traffic.

The membership wants to clearly and specifically state that traffic signals are needed for all pedestrians, particularly older adults and people with a disability, to safely cross a busy intersection. The danger and safety concerns for pedestrians in changing an existing signalized intersection into a 4-way stop is not acceptable to the AAC, and in their advisory capacity, they wish this clearly communicated to Council.

Moved by: Stacey Heady-Komenda

Seconded by: Julie Morris

That the intersection of St. Paul Street and Carlisle Street remain a traffic signalized intersection for pedestrian safety; and

That the related content of the AAC's Minutes of September 28, 2016 be included in any report or consultation that discusses any alternatives in order to highlight the safety concerns of people with a disability.

CARRIED

d. Accessible on-street parking on secondary roadways;

- Steve Bittner, Transportation TES

Steve Bittner noted receiving questions regarding the possibility of providing accessible on-street parking on neighborhood streets from residents. He brought the question to the AAC and discussion regarding framework, details, and use by all vs. designated spaces were brought forward. As this consideration is recent he felt that knowing of the AAC's general support for accessible on-street parking

was sufficient for TES transportation staff to take next-steps. He was asked to bring any further details and status updates to a future AAC meeting.

4. **Business arising from the minutes**

a. Accessibility Plan:

i. Accessible Transit;

Members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) who are regular users of transit have previously voiced concern regarding the discomfort and tie-down issues relating to using buses that have rear-facing accessible seating.

The St. Catharines Transit Commission has noted that there are 4 buses with this configuration that were purchased in the same model year. 2 other buses are due to be retired. Bus manufacturers thought that this design was innovative at the time. People who use a mobility device have voiced their concerns to transit providers of the many communities in Canada and internationally who have rear-facing accessible seating on buses. Some have posted videos on YouTube (https://youtu.be/zbe_pKo9ho) to advocate for change and voice their concerns.

Moved by: Diane Foster

Seconded by: Linda-Marie O'Hagan

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the St. Catharines Transit Commission's application for funding to retrofit buses that have rear-facing accessible seating for people who use wheelchairs.

CARRIED

ii New accessibility webpage;

Staff noted that the facility accessibility attributes webpage is now posted on the City's website. Accessibility summer student, Erin Lowry, collected and organized access information for various City facilities. Over the summer the AAC and affiliated staff were circulated for feedback on this information. The AAC was circulated on the newly posted webpage in early September.

iii Accessible communication;

The AAC was also circulated on the City's media launch of the Communication Disability Access Canada (CDAC) symbol. Over the summer various front-line staff took the CDAC e-training modules to educate them on providing dignified and effective customer service to people with a communication disability not due to hearing loss. The AAC thanked the many staff who took this training.

iv JAAC meeting visit by chairpersons;

Diane Foster and Shelley Stewart were invited to Niagara's Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC) meeting on September 15th. This committee is administered by Donna Herrington of The Herrington Group and represents 6 of Niagara's smaller municipality; Niagara-on-the-Lake, Lincoln, West Lincoln, Grimsby, Thorold and Pelham. St. Catharines AAC chairs were invited to provide access updates. They shared the City's 2016-2020 Accessibility Plan, 2015 list of successes, recently updated Sidewalk Action Statement and the AAC friendly reminder regarding sidewalk ad board barriers. Shelley Stewart and Diane Foster noted there was excellent 2-way discussion and that JAAC also has many achievements.

b. Council meetings

Staff noted that Cogeco Cable, St. Catharines community TV channel, recently discontinued the communication access real-time transcription (CART) services as part of its coverage, which provided live closed captioning (CC) of City Council meetings to the community. Screen text broadcasted virtually simultaneous (real-time) coverage onto the Cogeco Cable feed of Council meetings through an offsite 3rd party service. CART service, before it was discontinued, allowed viewers with hearing disabilities to read on the screen what was being said by all speakers at a Council meeting.

Additionally, the City recently launched live-web-streaming coverage of its Council meetings through the City's website. At the time, as Cogeco Cable was providing CART coverage, a budget was not factored in for a duplicate service when live-streaming.

Given the highly accessible format of CART for people with a hearing disability and opportunity to engage and inform this sector of the community, members of the AAC noted support for CART to be added to the live-web-streaming of Council meetings.

Moved by: Linda Marie O'Hagan

Seconded by: Julie Morris

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee supports the City Clerk's budget request for communication access real-time transcription (CART) for live-web-streaming of Council meetings to make them more accessibility to people with a hearing disability.

CARRIED

5. **AAC Updates:**

a) Site Plan;

No report

b) Community access and media;

Linda Marie O'Hagan provided numerous community and media updates to the members as FYI. Staff will forward links to the AAC following the meeting.

c) City Projects, Christine Adams, TES;

Deferred

6. **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday, October 26, 2016 at 1:30 p.m., Locke Meeting Rooms at Kiwanis Aquatics Centre, 425 Carlton St. at Niagara St.

7. **Motion to Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Moved by: Bob Asham

Seconded by: Tracey Hrick

That this meeting is adjourned.

CARRIED