

# Meeting Minutes



City of Guelph

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)**

Meeting held remotely via Cisco Webex

August 18 2020

From 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Meeting Chair: Mike Greer

Vice-Chair: Malcolm McLeod

**Attendance:** Michael Greer, Malcolm McCloud, Brooke Sillaby, Bryan McPherson, Deborah Stienstra, Donna McMurdo, Elizabeth Lowenge, Elyse Trudel, , Laura Root, Lynda Johnson, Lynn Jeaurond, Mike East, Sarah Mathison, Harold Grace,

**Regrets:** Edgar (Ted) Stevens, Jason Dodge

## **Agenda Items**

Welcome to all.

### **Item 1, 2 and 3**

Item 1, Approval of the Agenda

Approved: Mike

Seconded: Brooke

### **Carried**

Item 2, Declaration of Conflict of Interest – None heard

Item 3, Approval of Minutes of August 20, 2020

Approved Mike

Seconded Bryan

### **Carried**

## **Agenda Items**

### **3:05 to 3:15 Item 4**

Election of new vice chair – **For Recommendation** - Mike Greer,

### **Motion:**

Elyse Turdell nominated to the position of Vice Chair.

Approved Mike Greer

Seconded Laura Root

**Carried**

### **3:15 to 3:30 Item 5**

Transit update reopening into phase 3 – **For Information** – David Artuso- Acting Transit Supervisor

Transit Report – David Artuso – Jason Simmons reported that fares were collected again. As an update he reiterated that conventional drivers have a required face-shield and that Passengers are encouraged to wear a face masks and/or gloves. Transit has been making these available. And the Buses themselves are being cleaned several times throughout the operating hours. Boarding through front door on conventional buses and so any issues re: wheelchairs and service animals. Service levels are reduced to current hours. The Saturday schedule is now in place for Monday to Saturday Service; Sunday is regular Sunday schedule.

Regarding financial impact of Covid for transportation- 8 million being lost as U of G has withdrawn their bus pass agreement. Ridership is down 42% and Mobility 80%. Hand sanitizers are mounted at the front and rear door of the vehicles.

Layoffs are taking place with regards to Transportation and Mobility driver's schedules have been adjusted to cover for the part-time staff that have been laid off. Customer will not see any difference in service.

Recreation centers will open September 8<sup>th</sup> and Transit service on Mobility will not be impacted.

More people use Mobility in the colder weather. Transit is planning for more riders in these colder months.

Distancing for riders takes people with a disability who use the accessible spaces into account. Seats were crossed out and there was a maximum of passengers in phase 1. In phase 2 and 3 passengers are expected to wear a mask however this is not enforceable but riders have been doing a good job with this so far.

B) Information regarding an electronic device called Blind Square related to Guelph Transit system – Leanne Warren, Accessibility Project Specialist

The Blind Square system is a beacon system that send a message to a person who is blind or has low vision's cell phone that tells them where they are, what is close by in a way that helps this population navigate a space.

The focus of this system in the immediate future for Accessibility Services is the Transit system and the expansion that is planned over the next few years as a result of Federal funding.

Anyone can use the system however it is in place for people who are blind or have low vision. An example of how the system would be of benefit could be that a person who is blind could confirm that they are at the correct bus bay at the transit terminal.

A question was posed as to whether anyone can use the system as it is the organization who own the property (for example) that pay for the service then anyone can use it for free. This is still in the "idea" stage so Leanne will keep the AAC informed of the status.

### **3:30 to 3:45 Item 5**

Plans for Captioning Council meetings - **For Information** – Dylan McMahon Manager, Legislative Services / Deputy City Clerk

The AAC was interested in what the City of Guelph plans to do regarding captioning for council meetings Dylan used to be a still shot of Council and Rogers covers the meetings however only 40 – 50 % are captioning. Closed captions through Facebook are available through a link on Guelph.ca. These are auto-generating. When council can meet in chambers again, the live version will still have captioning but recorded versions do not have captions and budget has not been approved. Canadian Hearing Society would charge \$25,000 approximately on an annual basis.

The AAC noted that there is a huge difference between auto-captioning and a person captioning. Auto-caption is not accurate and doesn't provide enough support for people to understand Councils decisions.

Further, if people are wearing masks that it is difficult to hear however masks are not currently worn but will be kept in mind if in-person meetings begin again. Leanne will follow up with Dylan on this subject.

### **3:45 to 4:10 Item 6**

Community Road Safety Strategy update - **For Engagement**- Liraz Fridman, Transportation Safety Specialist Engineering and Transportation Services. Liraz met with the AAC in February to discuss. The Policy and Strategy have since been approved by Council.

There are 4 major difference to the new policy

- Speed threshold has been lowered 5 kph
- Volume criteria for school zones has been changed and is easier to be eligible
- Shortcutting through a neighbourhood. The majority of the engagements didn't have this issue.
- 2 stage criteria has been removed as it was a barrier to eligibility.

A street by street approach is also being looked at. Part of this is to lower speed limits. municipal scan is happening now and community engagement (including the AAC) to get recommendations on speeds and approaches.

There are 23 strategies – Leading pedestrian interval which gives pedestrians a few more seconds to get into the intersection  
Slow streets will also be available – discourages drivers other than for local use with temporary barrels. This will be tried on 6 local roads. Countdown timers will not be changed however the red light will be delayed a few seconds.

#### **4:10 to 4:25 Item 7**

COVID parking and the Farmers Market- **For Information** – Lauren Short, Traffic Technologist II Engineering and Transportation Services; Paul Hutchison, Supervisor Traffic Engineering

Lauren asked a question: MacDonnell was required to close which impacted 2 accessible parking space and so they were relocated as close as possible and to be near curb ramps. Once the roads are open again, the parking spaces will be put back to pre-COVID 19 layout. The Farmer's Market expanding onto Freshfield have been relocated onto Farquar street and four accessible parking spaces were added, as well as 1 space in the lay-by on Gordon in front of the market. These will also return to pre-COVID 19 layout.

#### **4:25 to 4:40 Item 8**

Accessible Patio Planning – **For Information**- Chris Lytle, Accessibility Coordinator

Chris reported that the Provincial Government allowed businesses to open patios and that required municipalities to adjust accordingly making this is a pilot project through Economic Development. Chris had sent a draft of accessible layout that includes curb ramps for patios are on the street level. He is looking at Colour contrasts, and paths into the patio that have to be accessible.. Next year the plans and designs will be more accessible and better thought out as staff were overwhelmed because there was not way of knowing how this would have worked out. The AAC suggested that we contact the City of Toronto to share tactics.

The AAC are concerned that the patios and street closures will be permanent. Chris asked AAC members to let him know if there are concerns with regard to barriers. AAC members are encourage think about possible barriers and to communicate that with him. This is an evolving situation and we should keep Chris informed of concerns.

The Short term goals of Chris is the oversight of the situation to understand any potential barriers.

Another point is to build capacity of those owning the patios and this be a partnership and so any discussion regarding patios includes thinking about accessibility in the planning. AAC noted that Stats Canada has numbers on the spending power of people with a disability. Chris will keep this topic on the agenda to report back and to gain further input. The AAC noted that it is less expensive to plan with accessibility in mind rather than trying to make things accessible after the fact.

Chris reported the difficulty that City of Guelph staff have had because the Province allowing patios to open. Staff were overwhelmed with the number of businesses opening patios. The numbers are Changing daily, the plans that the businesses have are

changing daily in many cases and we fully understand this however trying to make accessibility top of mind was and is not as easy as it would seem. Culture shift is needed. With this in mind, I want to call your attention to a webinar next week:

#### **4:30 to 4:40 Item 9**

City COVID -19 update phase 3 – **For Information** - Leanne Warren, Accessibility Specialist

City's webpage (<https://guelph.ca/2020/08/city-of-guelph-responding-to-coronavirus/>) that is focused on COVID 19 update speaks to the following:

The West End Community Centre is open for customer service, library and pool. Customer service counter at City Hall is open for specific services such as bus passes and tax payments. Libraries are open and Museums are open

Balance is top of mind for communications staff as they are understanding that one brush stroke does not include everyone. They and many other departments are trying to deal with the details of the general statements by the Province.

The City is thanking people for wearing a mask or face covering if they can however it seems that regardless of the information that is out there, such as business signs that say, if you can, wear a face mask, people are still rude to those who do not have a mask on at times.

The CNIB and GIL have been encouraged to check the City's website and convey any information that they would be helpful for their clients such as Road and sidewalk changes.

There are making temporary road and sidewalk changes so people walking and cycling can stay 2 meters apart. Changes include closing one lane of traffic to provide extra space for people walking and cycling, creating one-way sidewalks and putting signs ahead of narrow sidewalks/trails asking people to yield to oncoming pedestrians.

Staff understood some reasons for unique signs for information related to COVID 19 such as if changes are announced, such as COVID 19 measures ending, a person is more likely to make a connection that they route was altered because of COVID19 and that it is likely that they typical new COVID 19 route is now reverting back to the way it was. For example, two-way pedestrian travel on a sidewalk that was one-way pedestrian travel during COVID 19 changes.

Leanne had discussed the David Onley – AODA and COVID 19 talk that was on Aug 27 from 1 – 2 link: Participants were invited to "The Progress of the AODA and COVID-19's Impact on Accessibility in Ontario" Thursday, August 27, 2020. It was a free event.

In closing Leanne spoke about how difficult it has been to work through all that has happened. The difficulties continue and so letting the City and Chris know of actual barriers to access is helpful. We will work to remove these barriers but the solution may not be as expected as we cannot create new barriers or create risk related to COVID 19.

Leanne reiterated that we are still in a state of emergency and this is all still new to all of us. Working as a team is the ideal as Chris and I can carry your messages to other

departments and staff. The AAC shared that Dr. Mercer is on CKCO TV on Friday nights. The AAC shared information regarding being in the hospital during this pandemic.

The AAC encouraged to share any information on personal experience with Chris and/or Leanne as the City is gathering information from individuals and organizations on specific topics and the impacts of COVID 19. The information will be used in many ways including to advocate Queens Park regarding lessons learned and advice for consideration going forward.

The AAC asked if we will continue to meet like this. The response from Dylan of the Clerk's office was that we we will continue to meet remotely until public health professionals advise that we can meet in-person. The AAC will follow this same advice and instructions from the Clerk's office.