

Meeting Details

Subject: Northeast BC Accessibility Committee November Meeting #15

Meeting Date: December 12, 2024

Time: 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM

Location: Virtual – Zoom

File: UM1958.0495.01

Attendees

Name	Organization
Denis Bento	District of Tumbler Ridge
Darcy Guay	Peace River Regional District
Diana Jewan	Community Member - Hudson's Hope
Edwina Nearhood	Fort St. John - Community Member
Kristi Leer	Community Member - Fort Nelson
Lori Slater	Community Member - Fort St. John
Savonnaé Street	City of Dawson Creek
Bill Darnbrough	City of Dawson Creek
Devon Aaroe	City of Dawson Creek
Steve McLain	District of Chetwynd
Marla Reed	Community Member – Dawson Creek
Katie Stelfox	District of Tumbler Ridge
Gracie Boake	Community Member – Peace River Regional District
Jake Papineau	Urban Systems Ltd.
Kathryn Rutherford	Urban Systems Ltd.
Isha Matous-Gibbs	Urban Matters

Regrets

Name	Organization
Annette Andrews	Peace River Regional District
Matthew Cybulski	Village of Pouce Coupe
Chris Civic	District of Hudson's Hope
Deanne Ennis	District of Chetwynd
Sherri Maycock	District to Taylor
Ellen McAvany	District of Chetwynd
Ryan Kirkham	Peace River Regional District
Gerri Bird	District of Hudson's Hope
Hillary Sheppard	Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
Jan Atkinson	Community Member – Dawson Creek
Jennifer Morris	Pouce Coupe – Community Member
Kelsey Shewfelt	District of Hudson's Hope
Lisa Thompson	Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
Vanessa Harris	City of Fort St. John
Marsha Dufresne	Tumbler Ridge – Community Member
Matt Chorney	Prospective Community Member – Pouce Coupe
Naomi Larsen	Community Member - Chetwynd
Kenna Williams	Urban Systems Ltd.

Meeting Minutes

Item 0.0 – Materials provided in advance

- November 14, 2024, Northeast BC Collaborative Accessibility Committee Meeting Minutes #14
- December 12, 2024, Northeast BC Collaborative Accessibility Committee Meeting Agenda #15
- November 14, 2024, Northeast BC Collaborative Accessibility Committee Meeting Minutes #14 – Accessibility-Checked Version
- December 12, 2024, Northeast BC Collaborative Accessibility Committee Meeting Agenda #15 – Accessibility-Checked Version

Item 1.0 – Territorial Acknowledgement Introduction and Welcome

- We respectfully acknowledge that the communities of Northeastern BC are situated on the traditional territories of the Dane-zaa, Dene, Cree, Dunne Tsaá, Tsáá? Ché Ne Dane, Tse'khene, Dene Tha', Kaska peoples, Dunne-za, and the Métis Nation BC Region 7. The Northeastern BC Collaborative Accessibility Committee recognizes the many Indigenous communities with ongoing connections to the land base on which we are situated and the many more whose communities have meeting grounds, gathering places and travelling routes across the region. We recognize and value the significant contributions of Indigenous Peoples who have lived and worked on this land since time immemorial.
- **Jake Papineau** delivers a territorial acknowledgement from Calgary on Treaty 7 Territory, the ancestral and traditional territory of the Siksikaitsitapi – the Blackfoot Confederacy, which includes the Kainai Nation, Piikani Nation, Amskapi Piikani, and the Siksika Nation. Treaty 7 is also home to the Tsuut'ina Nation, the Stoney Nakoda, and the Métis and Inuit, who have lived in and cared for these lands for generations.
- Acknowledgements from attendees:
 - ♦ **Edwina Nearhood** is calling in on Treaty 8 territory of the Dunne-zaa and calling in from Fort St. John.
 - ♦ **Krisi Leer** calling in from Fort Nelson BC in NRRM on Treaty 8 and Dene territory. **Kristi** introduces a potential community member from Fort Nelson. **Brandy Millay** introduces that she is originally from Northern Alberta and is currently in Fort Nelson, she is Non-Status Cree, has long brown hair, pale skin, brown eyes, wears glasses and uses a cane.
 - ♦ **Gracie Boeke** is from Treaty 8 in Dawson Creek and is the Community Living BC (CLBC) manager of Northeast BC.

Item 2.0 – Action Tracker

Action Item Number:	9-4
Action By:	Urban Matters
Status:	Done
Description of Action:	Jake from Urban Matters to put together an outline of the annual report over the summer, which shall be reviewed, discussed, and approved by the committee before September. The committee shall decide how the report will be shared and who it will be shared to.
Timeline:	November 2024

- The link to the Annual Report got missed being sent out after the end of last meeting. So it will be in the email with this meeting's meeting. A copy is also available on the SharePoint.

Action Item Number:	9-5
Action By:	All committee members
Status:	In Progress
Description of Action:	The committee to review the Terms of Reference recruitment language and include September as the dedicated open application period for new committee members.
Timeline:	Early November 2024

- Jake** mentioned that he has circulated the TOR and if any committee member has feedback to please reach out to him.
- Edwina** mentioned to **Jake** that she did not have access to SharePoint after clicking on the link in the last email. **Jake** will follow up with **Edwina** after the meeting to check the SharePoint access.

Action Item Number:	13-6
Action By:	Jake / UM
Status:	Done
Description of Action:	Jake , on behalf of the Committee, shall invite Tommy Leung from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to present at the January 2025 Committee Meeting.
Timeline:	Early January 2025

- Tommy Leung** is scheduled to present at the Committee Meeting on January 9, 2025.

Item 3.0 – Committee Updates

- **Edwina** mentions that she is not sure if this is the right place to bring it up but wanted to bring it forward that not all people in the blind community qualify for the home owner's disability grants. **Edwina** says that there are three criteria to qualify; first if you are on provincial disability assistance under the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act. Second if you pay at least \$150 per month for assistance with daily living activities, or third if you have spent at least \$2,000 on structural modification for the your primary residence, or bought a house with qualifying modifications of \$2,000.
 - ♦ To learn more about the criteria visit: [Home Owner Grant – person with disabilities](#)
- **Edwina** mentions that currently she does not qualify for the Home Owner grant because she is on CPP disability, and does not live at her primary residence but if she did there would not be major modifications needed to be made. **Edwina** mentions those are typically for those requiring modifications for mobility devices like wheelchairs.
- **Edwina** wanted to bring it forward to send a request to UBCM to ensure that all persons with disabilities are eligible for the home owners grant. **Kristi** seconds the notion. **Edwina** asks that we be ambitious and try and complete a draft for the January meeting in order to get it into budgeting for UBCM. **Kristi** also suggests for **Edwina** to visit the MLA's office and discuss this.
 - ♦ **Action Item 15-1: Jake** will draft a letter for UBCM and share it at the January 9th, 2025 committee meeting to receive feedback.

Item 4.0 – TOR and Annual Report Draft Updates

- **Jake** mentions that it got missed to send an email out with the Annual Report. It is available on the SharePoint. Following this meeting with the meetings and agenda, a link to the Report will be sent out. If anyone is facing any SharePoint issues to please reach out to **Jake** or **Kathryn Rutherford**.
 - ♦ **Jake** mentions that any feedback that you provide on the Annual Report makes it easier on our end as committee facilitators to make sure that we're capturing the right information, presenting things in the appropriate ways and being considerate of our various audiences that might be reading it.

Item 5.0 – Accessibility Grants and Programs

- **Jake** and **Kiyomi** have identified several grants and funding opportunities that may be of interest to the group.
 - ◆ **Jake** reminds the committee that several grants and programs are currently available and that deadlines are approaching. He encourages committee members to reach out for support in brainstorming project ideas.
- Upcoming grants and deadlines
 - ◆ [Local Community Accessibility Grants – Stream 1 – Local Government-led Projects](#)
 - This funding stream is designed to support local governments with a clear project they would like to implement.
 - Applications will be received and approved on a rolling basis until **March 31, 2026**
 - ◆ [Local Community Accessibility Grants – Stream 2 – Capacity Building and Support](#)
 - This funding stream is designed to assist local governments who are unsure where to start implementing a project.
 - Applications will be received and approved on a rolling basis until **March 31, 2026**
 - ◆ [Community Gaming Grants](#) – Human Services Stream
 - Community Gaming Grants provide \$140 million annually throughout B.C. to support the delivery of ongoing programs and services that meet the needs of their communities.
 - **Closed November 30, 2024**
 - ◆ [BC Rehab Project Grant Program](#)
 - The BC Rehab Project Grant program intends to create opportunities for the full participation of people with physical disabilities. They encourage projects that involve multiple community partners, promote universal access, have clearly defined objectives and demonstrate community support.
 - **Closed November 15th, 2024** (for a December 13th decision)
 - **February 14th, 2025** (for a March 31st, 2025 decision)
 - ◆ **Jake** mentions that this grant should have multiple community partners and should promote universal access.
 - ◆ **Edwina** asks if the BC Rehab grant would be appropriate for the Pomeroy Sport Centre to get accessible exercise equipment. **Jake** says that is a great question and something that he can look into and let **Edwina** know.

- **Action Item 15-2: Jake** and UM to check the grant eligibility and follow up with **Edwina**.
- ◆ She mentions that one issue with the Pomeroy Sport Centre multilevel building it is difficult to navigate with limited O&M (orientation and movement) training. She is not able to get off the bus on the east side of 96th street in Fort St. John and navigate into the building. The HandyDart would be the alternative if it was more accessible and cheaper than the Bus system and dropped off at the front door. She mentions that doing a Transportation Audit for Fort St John within the community would be a great project.
- ◆ **Edwina** also wonders if there is any grants available for getting Occupational Therapists to come to home communities like Fort St. John to give O&M training, as CNIB will not come up to Fort St. John because there is not enough demand, and dropped Edwina from their caseload. O&M training is important to happen in people's home communities so they are able to navigate around it. **Edwina** is going to reach out and find what she can do internally with CNIB and Vision Loss Canada to deal with this policy issue for those living in rural areas.
- ◆ **Jake** says that he will look into the grant program and see if something could be supported through this.
- ◆ [Vision Zero in Road Safety Grant Program](#)
 - This grant provides funding to British Columbians who are looking to make their roads safer for their community through one of two streams:
 - Stream #1: Funds low-cost road infrastructure for vulnerable road users and supports innovative safety projects.
 - Stream #2: Allows Indigenous communities to set road safety priorities, including infrastructure upgrades, planning, public awareness, and bike-share programs.
 - **Closed November 29, 2024**
 - Jake emphasizes the committee's willingness to support these applications by providing letters of support.
- **Jake** asks if anyone from local government attending today can speak to any sort of accessibility related grants that might have been approved.



- **Kristi** mentions that NRRM is working on a downtown Accessible Parking Plan. The plan sets out publicly available accessible parking stalls on the road frontage. There was a presentation to the NRRM AIC on December presentation to the AIC on December 3rd. The presentation included showing some of the parking concepts and providing an update of the project. The project is going to be happening alongside already planned sidewalk and letdown construction. The project team also provided an update that they applied to Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) to try and cover some of the project costs. **Kristi** added that they tried not to change too many of the parking configurations (like angled parking), as people using the accessible stalls are used to that routine, and it could cause distress and cause people to lose confidence going out.
- **Kristi** adds that one thing they were seeking suggestions on where sensory panels at intersections because of the bubble strips were causing issues for wheelchairs users and thinking about cutting the cement like rumble strips on roads leading up to intersections. Since the NRRM AIC does not have someone with vision loss lived experience **Kristi** asked **Edwina** if she had any suggestions, as it is almost a conflict between the two accessibility needs. **Edwina** says that it is tough one since if they made it smooth them she would not be able to tell when the road started which is scary. **Kristi** and **Edwina** agreed they were both unsure what is the right suggestion to give as they were both not that experienced with the topic. **Edwina** suggests that the project team reach out to CNIB for resources.
- **Devon Aaroe** from the City of Dawson Creek provides an update on the City of Dawson Creek that they have not had any directly accessible related projects, and have not planned on any grants. But they have been gathering lots of feedback including a session they did in fall talking and listening about busing, downtown sidewalks, intersections and crosswalks. The City is planning on doing a winter session to focus on specific winter issues. As they do not have all of the answers, they want to hear and listen from the folks who actually face the issues and challenges. The meetings are not meant to be political, but instead, how do we fix these engineering-type conversations.
 - **Devon** has recently met with a group about transit and then with BC transit to now do website review. He has also reached out to their government relations manager to with work the local advocates to change BC Transit's website province wide. Devon points out that making connections is where this committee is important to come in.
 - **Devon** says that with feedback they are able to continuously improve and integrate their construction project. Including one recently where they had issues with the 'three blind mice' at the letdowns where people were not able to feel them. When their consultant when out and tested it, they also were not able to feel them. **Devon** then reiterates that this feedback is important because what may not mean something to some people means a world of difference to others in accessibility.

Item 6.0 – Committee Open Discussion / New Business

- **Jake** opens the floor to any items that committee members would like to discuss.
- **Edwina** says that she gives the hats off to **Devon** for the shift of the culture happening in the Dawson Creek to listen as that is the first step. To get people with lived experience involved to give their feedback. **Edwina** explains that she is on a Northern Health Accessibility Committee and is running into issues of not being included on the development of the Terms of Reference.
 - ♦ **Edwina** says that is important for those engineers, city planners, transportation planners and designers work with people with lived experience and accessibility committees to not make accessibility a side of the desk project. **Edwina** shares that is has been a difficult transition with sudden vision loss due to people's biases and how so many systems are built for accessible. She says that she has dealt with a lot of negative biases and interactions with those in healthcare and tis should be something that is included in their training. However, there is a sense of belonging in the northern communities because people care and want to help but sometimes do not know how to help.
 - ♦ **Jake** thanks **Edwina** for her insight of what the committee is about. Jake mentions that it is interesting because there is both challenges and opportunities within the built forum, but then there's also challenges and opportunities socially with how we interact with one another. **Jake** mentions how we learn from one another and as individuals with lived experience of disability, that your experience has changed over time as well and that your understanding of your lived experience has evolved and changed and it'll continue to do so like we're all changing and trying to learn from one another. That sense of belonging and, how we communicate with one another, so that we all feel that feeling of belonging.
- **Kristi** wonders if this committee is for spaces or healthcare. **Jake** responds that it is up to the committee. **Kristi** shares that meeting on January 15th with Spinal Cord Injury BC that is supporting an initiative to campaign on the right to pee freely for those who have catheters on the regular. A similar initiate happened in Alberta and was very successful.
 - ♦ **Devon** asks if the committee would like to send a representative to that meeting. **Edwina** seconds the motion. **Devon** says we could send a representation to that meeting and report back. And if there is at some point a petition the committee can decide if we wanted to sign and move forward. **Kristi** said that she would be able to attend and report back at the February meeting. **Lori** mentions that she is with Spinal Cord Injury BC and they have been going back forth on this for years and she is happy that they are finally supporting this issue.
 - ♦ **Action Item 15-3: Kristi** to attend the January 15th Spinal Cord Injury BC meeting and report back to the committee in the February 2025 meeting.

- **Devon** asks **Jake** and the Urban team if they chair or are involved with any other regional accessibility committees like ours. As it would be interesting to see what they are doing with their committees to learn from them, and collaborate. **Jake** introduces **Isha Matous-Gibbs**, a UM colleague who is just back from parental leave that is on the call.
 - ◆ **Isha** introduces that she goes by she/her and they/them. She has brown shoulder length hair and wears glasses. Isha actually helped work on the Northeastern BC Collaborative Accessibility Plan in 2023, and was at the first couple committee meeting before going on parental leave.
 - ◆ **Isha** mentions that there are not any other combined regional accessibility with a Regional District and Regional Municipality committees like NEAC in BC that UM works with. There are several regional district accessibility committees in the lower part of the province including– Strathcona Regional District, Comox Valley Regional District, Alberni-Clayquit Regional District, and North Shore Vancouver has three communities working together. Isha mentions that looking at what other committees are doing would be a good approach. She is currently just 10 weeks back from parental leave but is going back to the communities that she helped with their accessibility plans and committees to have conversations on how they are going.
 - ◆ **Lori** mentions that she is with Northern BC Tourism Association and she has been in contact with other northern communities on what is going on for accessibility in their community. **Lori** states that it is important for the committee to get in contact with other committees. **Jake** thanks **Lori** for her comments saying that there is a lot we can learn from other committees so we don't have the same growing pains. He says that with the committee's maturity some of these things will fall into place easier. **Edwina** asks if we can invite a representative from another committee like Prince George to tell us what they have accomplished to date. **Jake** mentions that is a great idea.
- **Kristi** went to the non-profits in her community to see how they could support her. She has three main needs to live in Fort Nelson; adult respite, home companionship not homecare or nurses, and help with cooking my meals. The nonprofits that are in Fort Nelson are; the Family Development Society, the Literacy Society, the Friendship Centre and NENAS. **Kristi** is not eligible for their services due to her income, age and insurance. So when **Kristi** saw the gaps and people like **Kristi** fell through the gaps; she is wanting to set up a non-profit to fill those gaps. **Kristi** says that others don't look at this part of our life when they're supporting our getting back to our life or our mental health. **Kristi** says that she is starting a non-profit in Fort Nelson with a board of directors being formed from the other non-profits. The non-profit will be called Step Up's Recovery Society has a need here to support those with Neurological disorders in Fort Nelson. **Kristi** asks that those in the committee look at their communities and see where the gaps that persons with disabilities are falling through the cracks during their recovery with the services provided.



Item 6.0 – Closing Business

- **Jake** reminds everyone that the next meeting is on January 9th, 2025 and encourages members to send any discussion topics to him, **Kathryn** or **Kenna Williams** in advance.
- Next meeting date: **January, 9th 2025, 1:30 – 3:00 PM**
- The meeting minutes and other discussed information will be sent out.
 - ♦ **Jake** and **Kathryn** will work on the meeting minutes and ensure they are sent to everyone in advance.
- The meeting ended at 2:32 PM (MST).

End of meeting minutes.

URBAN MATTERS CCC LTD.

Jake Papineau,

Committee Facilitator

cc: All Committee Members