

MEETING MINUTES

SUBJECT: Northeast BC Accessibility Committee April Meeting #21

MEETING DATE: JUNE 12, 2025

TIME: 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM

LOCATION: Virtual – Zoom

FILE: UM1958.0495.01

ATTENDEES

Full Name	Location
Sam Loran & Robert McGuire	Guest Speakers – City of Fort St. John
Bonnie McCue	City of Fort St. John
Darcy Guay	Peace River Regional District
Diana Jewan	Community Member – Hudson's Hope
Kristi Leer	Community Member – Fort Nelson
Steve McLain	District of Chetwynd
Isha Matous-Gibbs	Urban Matters
Kenna Williams	Urban Systems

REGRETS

Full Name	Location
Annette Andrews	Peace River Regional District
Bill Darnbrough	City of Dawson Creek
Chris Civic	District of Hudson's Hope
Deanne Ennis	District of Chetwynd
Denis Bento	District of Tumbler Ridge
Dennis Stavrou	Village of Pouce Coupe
Devon Aaroe	City of Dawson Creek
Ellen McAvany	District of Chetwynd
Gerri Bird	District of Hudson's Hope
Gracie Boake	Community Member – Peace River Regional District
Hillary Sheppard	Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
Jan Atkinson	Community Member – Dawson Creek
Jennifer Morris	Community Member – Village of Pouce Coupe
Katie Stelfox	District of Tumbler Ridge
Lori Slater	Community Member – Fort St. John
Lisa Thompson	Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
Marla Reed	Community Member – Dawson Creek

Marsha Dufresne	Community Member – Tumbler Ridge
Matthew Cybulski	Village of Pouce Coupe
Matt Chorney	Prospective Community Member – Pouce Coupe
Naomi Gallant	City of Fort St. John
Naomi Larson	Community Member – Chetwynd
Ryan Kirkham	Peace River Regional District
Sherri Maycock	District of Taylor

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 Tsaa, Tsáá? Çhé 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.

ITEM 2.0 – Guest Presentation

- City of Fort St. John will be presenting – looking to amend the City's process to better define criteria for approval on street accessible stalls for downtown businesses and to add certainty to if/when an accessible stall gets removed.
- Guests from the City of Fort St. John: Robert McGuire and Sam Loran.
 - Surveys were conducted in Fort St. John, one for business and one for the public. 20% of respondent had mobility issues. A quarter of the respondents were only willing to travel 200 feet from a parking stall to the business. 17% were willing to travel 300 feet and the remaining would travel 350 feet or more from the parking stall to the business. Have received numerous requests for more accessible parking stalls. 101st Ave has a cluster of health businesses that should have accessible parking stalls. Have met one on one with Lori Slater and SPARC BC about accessibility issues in the past. There are currently 304 placard holders in Fort St. John. Currently accessible stalls are only put in when a business requests them.
 - We are looking for on street parking only for this new process. Wanting to have a best practice for this process in place.
- There are three questions they would like some input from this committee on:

- 1) 101st Avenue is a cluster of health offices and high traffic businesses. Are ramps necessary for each accessible stall? Does each accessible stall need their own letdown?
 - 2) Placement of let downs – can existing let downs be used especially where areas have a slimmer sidewalk there may not be enough room to have a letdown at each accessible stall. The offices along 101st Avenue have been identified, are there any other business that should have a letdown.
 - 3) What types of business are really needed to have these accessible stalls.
- Isha asks Kristi and Diana to speak to these questions.
 - Krist – thank you for bringing this to our committee. This is the purpose of this committee and we are all working together. As a wheelchair user the only trouble is where you put the ramps, make sure no one can park near it or in front of it. People with disabilities need to be able to go everywhere. The goal is to have these everywhere.
 - Diana – I have mobility issues and pain issues and do not visit Fort St. John very often. And when I do its only for a medical appointment. Let downs are very difficult as I can stumble or trip when using a cane at the letdown, so I avoid them. Narrow sidewalks with a letdown also are difficult.
 - The committee will discuss the questions and will respond back to the City of Fort St. John.
ACTION 21-1: Respond back to the City of Fort St. John on the questions they have brought forward to the committee.
 - From Sam and Robert at Fort St. John: If anyone is interested, we gave an in-depth presentation on our parking survey to Council on June 12th. The minutes can be found here <https://fortstjohn.civicweb.net/filepro/document/139439/Committee%20of%20the%20Who%20-%202006%20Jan%202025%20Minutes.pdf?widget=true> and the video here <https://fortstjohn.civicweb.net/filepro/document/138880/Committee%20of%20the%20Who%20-%202006%20Jan%202025.html?splitscreen=true&widget=true&media=true>.

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ITEM 3.0 – Action Tracker

Action Item Number:	16-2
Action By:	Urban Matters – Isha
Status:	In Progress
Description of Action:	Isha to prepare an invitation to Northern Health representative to attend a committee meeting and present at an upcoming committee meeting.
Timeline:	Will send out the invite for the next meeting to attend in June.

- Will have a Northern Health representative attend a committee meeting in the fall when more folks can attend.

Action Item Number:	19-1
Action By:	Isha / Urban Matters
Status:	Completed
Description of Action:	Isha to provide a NAAW Proclamation Request Letter to the Committee
Timeline:	May 8, 2025 Committee meeting Completed

- All but one of the communities was able to get in front of their councils to proclaim Accessibility Week. Thank you for all that made this happen.

ITEM 4.0 – Committee Open Discussion / New Business

- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo has created a self assessing audit for buildings and events. Isha goes over the document online for all to see.
 - <https://www.rmwb.ca/en/community-services-and-social-support/accessibility-around-the-rmwb.aspx>
- BC Accessibility Hub has come out with courses available to all and are free. They have been adding more resources continuously. The registration is very easy and user friendly. There are many amazing tools that can be used and ways you can get involved. Isha shared her screen and goes through the website and where to find the resources. Sign up for the updates and new information. <https://bcaccessibilityhub.ca/>

Sam and Robert exit the meeting at 2:03 pm

ITEM 4.0 –Strategic Plan

- Sent out with the meeting invitation the updated strategic plan. We have a solid plan for 2025 and 20256 and some longer tasks for the future. Want to make the task achievable.

Short term goals

- **Support member** governments to achieve their accessibility improvement goals by reviewing projects, providing insight and lived experience, and sharing resources.
- **Learn together** about accessibility and the role of local government in removing barriers.
- **Suggest solutions** for governments to improve accessibility.
- **Set and achieve small wins** to practice working together effectively.
- **Choose a focus area or topic** each year to guide action plans.

Long term goals

- **Formalizing their role in municipalities** by being part of a referral process on major projects or projects with an accessibility component or that may benefit from an accessibility lens.
- **Have collaborative relationships** and/ or projects with Accessibility Committees from other prescribed organizations.
- **Host or attend public events to raise awareness** of accessibility issues.

2025 projects

- Letter to municipalities.
- Presentation to municipalities.
- Letters to other committees, organizations and the public.
- Media campaign materials to raise awareness of the feedback mechanisms.
- Business and events accessibility information sheets.
- Materials to promote National Accessibility Week 2026 and July Disability Pride and Awareness Month.

Discussion:

- Support our member municipality. A way we can reiterate our value and the work that we do. By forming a working group with a few of our committee members. There are some funds in the budget to support this task. Isha and/or Kenna can support with the letter drafting or refining and the broader community providing some media material to highlight the feedback mechanism all across the region. One single email that comes to this committee from all member communities is amazing. Have not had a ton of responses to date as this will require some promotion.

- Talked about creating a list of business or anyone applying for an event license so we can create awareness for these business how they can contribute to this. Once pager on why this is important and some key things they can do and some resources that can improve accessibility. Early in the new year we were to create materials to go with the accessibility week. Kristi and Lori have been keen to get out there and attend events.
- It was noted that July is disability pride month and this should be added to the list. Agreed, this should be added to the list.
- Kristi comments that she is able to come back to Fort Nelson permanently and excited to get back into her community. Fort Nelson has been working on a lot of accessible areas and she is very proud of her community.
 - Isha has recruited Kristi to be on the working group to help write letters to the municipalities on accessible. Raising awareness with municipalities is the logical first place to start. Isha and Kristi will choose a time when they can meet to support this work and work together. Would be fantastic to have a municipal staff in this conversation as well to help support that the letter will be written the way the municipality wants to receive it. Steve can help with this process as they should be to the point. Steve, Isha and Kristi will work together on this. A lot depends on the mayor and council on how they want to receive it.
 - There will be three working groups. Red shirt day and disability pride month, raising awareness with municipalities (letters presentations), and raising awareness with the public.
- It was noted that Lori is still recovering and on leave. She will be off another month or so but wants to also be apart of these working groups.
- Isha will arrange some group training session for July and August and will record for those that cannot make it. This way we can stay on track with our goals. Inviting select delegates to attend upcoming meetings, she will also set up an executive meeting to ensure we are on track.
- Discussion on disabled washroom and handicap stalls.

ITEM 4.0 – Closing Business

- Next meeting date: July 12, 2025 at 1:30 – 3:00 pm.
- The meeting minutes, along with other discussed information, will be sent out.
- The meeting ended at 02:38 PM (MST).

End of meeting minutes.

URBAN MATTERS CCC LTD.

Isha Matous-Gibbs,
Committee Facilitator

cc: All Committee Members

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