



# **North Shore Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference**

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## 1. About the Committee

The North Shore Accessibility Advisory Committee is a regional committee that supports the City of North Vancouver, and the Districts of North Vancouver and West Vancouver to remove barriers and improve overall accessibility for residents, staff, and other community members with disabilities.

In alignment with the Accessible BC Act, its role is to advise the three partner municipalities as they work to:

- a) Identify barriers to individuals in or interacting with the three municipalities.
- b) Remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.
- c) Develop and update their accessibility plans.

## 2. Vision Statement

The Committee advises the municipal partners on how to create equitable and accessible municipal services, facilities, and opportunities across all three municipalities.

## 3. Purpose

The North Shore Accessibility Advisory Committee has three primary functions. They support the North Shore municipal partner organizations by:

- a) Identifying barriers for people with disabilities who interact with our government organizations, seek services, and/or participate in the community in the following areas:
  - Employment
  - Delivery of services
  - The built environment
  - Information and Communications
  - Transportation
  - Procurement

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- b) Providing advice on how to remove and prevent barriers identified by the Committee or the community via feedback processes.
- c) Providing an accessibility lens on municipal plans and projects including the three municipal accessibility plans.

While education and awareness of accessibility issues and how they affect persons with disabilities is the responsibility of the municipalities, the Committee will provide input and feedback on initiatives and events hosted by the local governments and will be invited to support and participate in the promotion of such events, particularly during National Accessibility Week.

### 4. Ways of Working Together

The Committee functions in an advisory capacity. When feedback is solicited on a matter, members provide their own unique perspectives and lived experiences, contributing to a diverse and inclusive dialogue. The minutes will anonymously reflect the diversity of opinions shared.

When recommendations are required, the Committee will seek consensus amongst the viewpoints expressed before putting the matter to a majority vote. Minuting of such resolutions will also capture dissenting opinions to again reflect the diversity of opinions shared.

This approach fosters a holistic understanding of accessibility issues, allowing for more informed and responsive actions.

Voting may also take place in respect of governance matters, such as the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

In camera meetings are not expected for this Committee. But if they are deemed necessary by the municipal partner organizations, they may be held based upon the provisions of the *Community Charter*.

### 5. Influence on Decision-Making

The Committee is advisory in nature, making recommendations to the municipalities as required based on the unique perspectives and lived experiences of its members. While advocacy may also include the act of making recommendations and may co-exist to that extent within the framework of an advisory body, the role of the Committee is restricted to the purposes set out in section 3 of this Terms of Reference.

The Committee is not authorized to:

- a) make decisions with respect to accessibility matters – such decisions will be

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made by the municipalities or partner agencies, considering the Committee's feedback and recommendations where applicable and feasible;

- b) manage or direct the actions of staff on a day-to-day operational basis; or
- c) enter into agreements or contractual obligations.

The three municipalities engage the Committee on how to improve accessibility to ensure public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. Feedback received from Committee members will assist and guide advancements in the realm of accessibility. The municipalities will provide feedback to the Committee on how their input has influenced decision-making.

### **6. Frequency of Meetings**

#### **a) Regular Committee Meetings**

The Committee will meet six times per year. Each meeting will be two hours long with a short break approximately halfway through the meeting. Extending a meeting beyond:

- i. two hours shall require a resolution passed by two-thirds (2/3), and
- ii. two and a half hours shall require a unanimous vote,

of the Voting Members present in person and online. Under no circumstances shall a meeting extend beyond three hours. Consideration should be given for an additional short break if a meeting is to be extended and is required if the extension is to be beyond 30 minutes.

Meetings will be held in a hybrid manner, meaning participation will be possible both in person and virtually and will be held at one of the municipal halls with input from Committee members to be considered in preparing the annual schedule of meetings.

A regular meeting schedule will be set at the beginning of each new year and communicated to all members.

Regular meetings will be supported by Council and staff liaisons from the three municipal partners and the agendas for the meetings will be determined by the annual work plan.

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Quorum shall consist of 50% of the voting members appointed to the Committee being in attendance, either in person or electronically, within 20 minutes of the scheduled start of a meeting.

## **b) Special Meetings**

Each year, the staff liaison from each municipality can request one additional meeting if the Committee's feedback is needed to advance accessibility goals in their community accessibility plans or in other significant planning processes.

## **7. Membership**

### **a) Composition**

The Committee includes a maximum of 15 voting members from the three partner municipalities. Composition requirements include:

- i. At least half of the members are community members with disabilities; others may be community members who support persons with disabilities.
- ii. Three members are individuals from organizations on the North Shore that support persons with disabilities. When recruiting members from disability-serving organizations, people who also bring lived experience of disability will be prioritized.
- iii. At least three members are Indigenous persons, to the extent possible.
- iv. Balanced representation across the three North Shore communities.
- v. Committee members reflect the diversity of disabilities and persons in British Columbia. This includes the full demographic spectrum in each participating municipality.

### **b) Chair and Vice-Chair**

Two of the Committee's voting members will occupy the Chair and Vice-Chair roles. The responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair include:

- i. Facilitating bi-monthly Committee meetings.
- ii. Reviewing meeting conduct agreements and accessibility features at the beginning of each meeting.
- iii. Ensuring that the meeting agenda objectives are met.
- iv. Facilitating agenda requests from Committee members for the inclusion of no

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more than one or two unforeseen emergent issues requiring discussion at a Committee meeting. Actioning such issues is subject to the priorities within the annual work plan and subject to staff resources and capacity.

Each year, the Committee elects a Chair and Vice-Chair by secret ballot. If no voting members step forward, the above responsibilities can be conducted by one of the staff liaisons until a new Chair is recruited.

### **c) Term for Voting Members**

Voting members shall be appointed each year in respect of any vacancies or pending term expirations. Appointments are for a two-year period with terms concluding December 31<sup>st</sup>. Members whose terms are expiring may request a continuance for a further two-year period, but no member shall serve more than 4 consecutive years.

### **d) Managing Vacancies**

If three Indigenous members are not appointed, the positions will remain vacant while further recruitment efforts are underway. The three partner municipalities are responsible for all recruitment. The partner municipalities are also responsible for exploring alternate ways to engage Indigenous people in their accessibility work.

Any vacancy caused by the resignation or termination of a member shall be filled for the unexpired term of such member by selecting the most appropriate candidate from a waiting list or through the recruitment process led by one or more of the three partner municipalities.

When a person is appointed from a waiting list or through the recruitment process to fulfill an unexpired term of 6 months or less, then the potential for 4 years of Committee membership shall be considered to begin as of January 1st of the following year. The partner municipalities shall not be required to undertake a recruitment process for a vacant unexpired term of 6 months or less and may wait until their normal recruitment cycle to appoint a new member to such a vacancy.

### **e) Council Liaisons**

One member from each of the Councils of the District of West Vancouver, the District of North Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver sit on the Committee as *non-voting* members. Council members attend meetings to ensure that emerging issues and community priorities link to council priorities.

To the extent possible, partner municipalities should select a council liaison with lived experience of disability or professional knowledge of accessibility.

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## 8. Committee Resources

### a) Staff Liaisons

Each municipality is responsible for assigning a staff liaison who can support the Committee and collaborate with the other staff liaisons on the development of an annual work plan reflecting the plans, projects and priorities of the partner municipalities.

Responsibilities for meeting planning will rotate between the three staff liaisons on a one-year term. The three municipalities will assign a staff liaison lead who will be responsible for:

- i. Creation of agendas and meeting materials reflecting the requirements of the annual work plan.
- ii. Maintaining an up-to-date list of accessibility meeting requirements for members and ensuring the requests are fulfilled to the extent possible.
- iii. Booking accessibility services including CART captioning and other services as required.
- iv. Ensuring that meeting agendas, slides, and minutes are provided in the timeline agreed to in these Terms of Reference.
- v. Annual reporting to the respective municipal Councils on the work of the Committee, the work plan for the following year and the budget allocation required.

To the extent possible, partner municipalities should select a staff liaison with lived experience of disability or professional knowledge of accessibility.

### b) Administrative Support

A Committee Clerk shall be provided to the Committee by agreement of the partner municipalities. The Clerk will be responsible for recording minutes and preparing agenda packages in an accessible format for all Committee members.

### c) Guests and Members of the Public

Staff from other municipal departments and government bodies will serve as liaisons as needed.

Regular meetings of the Committee are open to the public unless grounds exist to close the meeting in accordance with the requirements of the *Community Charter*.



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## d) Training for Members and Support Staff

It is the responsibility of each municipality to ensure that all staff liaisons, elected officials and participating community members receive accessibility awareness training and a briefing on the Accessible BC Act before receiving their assignment.

## 9. Meeting commitments

### a) Conduct

All meetings will open with a review of the meeting agreements and accessibility for the meeting.

The meeting agreements explain the ways that Committee members agree to treat each other and staff. A more detailed list of the meeting agreements is available at the end of this document. They include:

- Listening with curiosity and compassion.
- Being patient, practice taking a pause.
- Holding space for multiple truths.
- Taking space, make space.
- Leaning into discomfort.
- Respect personal experiences and the thoughts and opinions of others.

### b) Membership Expectations

- Members are expected to work in the public interest, in keeping with the mandate of the Committee to provide advice to improve accessibility in the community and resolve any potential conflicts with their personal interests in order to support the Committee, including declaration of the nature of any potential conflict.
- Members are not permitted to speak to the media as representatives of the Committee unless authorized by the applicable municipal communications staff.
- Members agree to maintain in the strictest confidence and with due care and attention any confidential information provided to them, recognizing such information is the exclusive property of the Committee and the municipality from which the information originates.
- Members bring the full range of their skills, experiences and diversity to each

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issue and thus provide valuable input to the Committee on each matter considered.

- If Members plan to be absent from a meeting, they are to advise the Committee Clerk before the scheduled meeting. Absences and regrets will be recorded. If a member of the Committee is absent without reason, the Chair will contact them to discuss participation and barriers they may be facing.
- Any Member of the Committee who wishes to resign should contact the applicable staff liaison or Chair. Staff liaisons will work to fill any vacancy on the Committee, following composition requirements laid out in these terms of reference.
- If a Member misses three meetings in a row, they will be considered “resigned”. The staff liaison will reach out to the Chair and to the Member to confirm their resignation. If no response is received from the Member, the seat will be considered vacant.
- Members who are unable to fulfill the time commitment of the Committee are asked to resign. Members who resign are welcome to apply in a following year if their situation changes.

### **c) Meeting Accessibility**

The partner municipalities will budget for and provide the resources necessary for every member to be able to fully participate in Committee activities. This includes:

- Providing reasonable reimbursement for transportation and dependent care.
- Providing accessibility supports and provision of technical equipment and administrative aids required for participation in Committee activities.
- Providing meeting materials in an accessible format at least one week before each scheduled meeting and naming file attachments clearly so that revised or updated versions are apparent in the file name.
- Hosting meetings in a hybrid format with in-person and virtual attendance options.
- Including meeting links in the body of an email reminder to all members.
- Recording and generating a transcript for all open meetings for the use of Committee members and support staff and providing both the recording and transcript to Committee members as an accessibility support. The recording

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and transcript is not intended for the use of the general public.

These accessibility features will be provided as the default practice. All members are encouraged to share any additional access needs they have with the staff liaisons, who will do their best to provide a timely and suitable response to the request.

In recognition that disability is dynamic, and access needs can change over time, members will be consistently invited to share their needs as part of every meeting RSVP process. Any new information that the Committee needs to know will be mentioned in a standing agenda item at the beginning of each meeting.

Members are also asked to consider accessibility requests from their colleagues with respect and in the spirit of collaboration.

## 10. Key terms

### a) Disability

According to the [Accessible BC Act](#), disability is the result of an impairment interacting with a barrier. When this interaction minimizes someone's ability to fully and equally participate in society, disability occurs. This definition focuses our accessibility work on removing and preventing the barriers that people may encounter.

By this understanding, organizations like local governments can play a critical role in how their residents, staff, and other community members experience disability. They can proactively identify and remove barriers to make spaces, services and experiences more accessible.

### b) Impairment

Impairment is a term that includes physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive conditions.

The [Accessible BC Act](#) also recognizes that impairments can be permanent, temporary or episodic.

### c) Barrier

A barrier is anything that hinders the full and equal participation of a person with an impairment.

The [Accessible BC Act](#) states that barriers can be caused by:

- The physical environment

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- Attitudes
- Policies and practices
- Information, communications or technology

Barriers can also be affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.

### d) Accessibility

Accessibility is the intentional and proactive work we do to identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

According to the [World Health Organization's \*World Report on Disability\* \(2011\)](#), accessibility ensures that environments, services and products can be accessed by as many people as possible – in particular, people with disabilities.

### e) Ableism

Ableism is a set of attitudes, beliefs and practices that devalue or discriminate against people with disabilities. It is a system of oppression that is rooted in the belief that people without disabilities are superior to anyone from the disability community. Ableism is threaded throughout all levels of our society.

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## Appendix A- Community Agreements

- **Listen with curiosity & compassion.** Everyone has expertise and something new to learn.
- **Be patient, practice taking a pause.** Ensure that everyone is following along and can contribute.
- **Hold space for multiple truths.** Disability is diverse and even two people with the same disability will have different experiences of barriers and access.
- **Take space, make space.** Make more room for people who prefer to think quietly by offering alternative ways to contribute. Ask those who like to think out loud to wait to speak a second time until others have had the chance to contribute.
- **Lean into discomfort.** Discomfort is a sign that we have something new to consider or learn. Be kind to yourself and others on their learning journey.
- **Respect personal experiences.** Despite meetings being open to the public, members and staff may share their personal experiences of accessibility barriers or discrimination in our meetings. When taking minutes or sharing what we heard in the meeting, we focus on the ideas and not the identity of the speaker.