

# ST. JOHN'S

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## Inclusion Advisory Committee Minutes

**February 9, 2021**

**12:30 p.m.**

**Virtual**

Present:

Dr. Sulaimon Giwa, Co-Chair - Anti-racism  
Joby Fleming, Co-Chair - Empower NL  
Debbie Ryan, CNIB  
Kim Pratt Baker, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association  
Megan McGie, NL Association for the Deaf  
Trevor Freeborn, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities  
Ashley Gosse, Autism Society  
Grant Genova, NL Association of Architects, Universal Design  
Hope Colbourne, NL Association for Community Living  
Renata Lang, Association for New Canadians  
Heidi Edgar, Mental Health  
Jane Simmons, Physical and Neurological Disabilities  
Alyse Stuart, Women's Issues  
TJ Jones, LGBTQ2S  
Natalie Godden, Manager of Family & Leisure Services  
Sherry Mercer, Inclusion Coordinator  
Trisha Rose, Fieldworker III, Inclusion Services  
Shanna Fitzgerald, Legislative Assistant

Regrets:

Councillor Deanne Stapleton, Council Representative  
Donna Power, Metrobus/GoBus, Accessible Transit

Others:

Garrett Donaher, Manager - Transportation Engineering

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

#### **1.1 Approval to Share Committee Member E-mail Addresses**

As ATIPP legislation requires the protection of personal email addresses which would mean everyone would need to be blind copied, it was agreed by all present that email addresses could be shared among the group.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

It was advised that all delegations and presenters will be held to a timeline for their presentations to facilitate the timely discussion of agenda items.

**Moved By** Debbie Ryan

**Seconded By** Ashley Gosse

That the agenda be adopted as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES**

**3.1 Adoption of Minutes - November 26, December 1, and December 10, 2020**

**Moved By** Alyse Stuart

**Seconded By** Debbie Ryan

That the minutes of the meetings held on November 26, December 1, and December 10, 2020 be adopted as presented.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4. DELEGATION**

**5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**5.1 APS and Key 2 Access Update**

Garrett Donaher, Manager of Transportation Engineering provided an update on the status of Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) installations and the Key 2 Access Pilot Project as per the attached information note.

In August 2019, the City began a pilot project to test the Key 2 Access technology. The table in the attached shows the number of activations at each of the original locations.

Since the pilot project began, Key 2 Access has sold their technology to Polara, one of the leading Accessible Pedestrian Signal suppliers in North America. While new Key 2 Access installations are not available, the existing installations will continue to be supported. The City is hopeful that working with CNIB, Key 2 Access, Polara, BlindSquare, and/or other vendors a similar product will be available that combines the ease of APP or FOB activation with the audio messages available on the Key 2 Access system.

The City's standard practice is that all new signalized intersections are equipped with APS. (Though in some remote locations this may be modified to requiring that the new intersection be prepared for future installation.) The City also continues to pursue upgrades at existing crossings using the list referenced in the information note and opportunities with other projects to push this initiative forward. There is currently \$45,067.96 remaining in the APS budget. A previous allocation of \$50,000 has been identified and is expected to add to this figure for a total of \$95,067.96.

It was questioned if there has been simulation and review of conditions using this technology with the public. Mr. Donaher responded that the City has open ongoing conversation to receive feedback from community users to improve the system and feedback from CNIB has been positive. Members were reminded that they can provide feedback on these projects, and that when this project was initiated, in addition to the research done by the City and CNIB, there was an engagement process with the community to help identify pilot intersections for Key2Access technology. A member inquired if there has been discussion about extending this to the wider community for universal access and noted that this would be especially helpful during the pandemic. Options including smart centers are currently under consideration by CNIB.

The following motion was moved:

Recommendation

**Moved By** Debbie Ryan

**Seconded By** Joby Fleming

That a meeting be organized by City staff to include St John's Transportation (Metro Bus/Go Bus) and Key City Departments involved in projects where wayfinding solutions like blind square and PedApp can be discussed in greater detail.

These technologies may resolve conflict points, while fostering inclusion and integrated mobility in the design phase of projects like Kelly's Brook Shared-Use Path, our public transportation system, and the Downtown Pedestrian Mall.

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **5.2 Universal Design Kelly's Brook Path Engagement**

Kelly's Brook Shared-Use-Path is the first catalyst project coming from the Bike St John's Master Plan. The shared-use path will extend from King's Bridge Road to Columbus Drive. It is mostly in place as a granular walking path today, linking several neighbourhoods through an important east-west greenway that largely parallels Empire Avenue. Its goal is to provide an attractive and continuous 4.8 km active transportation route in St. John's, connecting popular destinations and amenities along the way. Path upgrades will be professionally designed by a team of consultants working closely with City staff. Part of the consultant's contract is to plan and execute public engagement on the design elements, with a focus on the environment, path users and impacted neighbourhoods. Public and stakeholder input will inform design elements such as lighting, surface material choice, path alignment, trailhead and rest area design, wayfinding, and other decisions that may emerge during the design process.

The path will be shared use, wheel and walk, and will likely not follow Kelly's Brook itself. Intersections will be upgraded where the path crosses, such as accessible signals, raised cross walks, tactile surfaces and/or curb bump outs for example. Sidewalks will also be upgraded to be 3 meters wide and power line polls moved where required. Wayfinding will be part of the design and the path may be lit during certain hours of the day. Kelly's Brook Shared-Use-Path connects with grocery stores, bus stops, recreation centres, community centres and playgrounds, and parking is available along the route.

Attached appendices to the agenda describe five surface types which are being considered for the shared-use path. Concrete is included as there are on-street sections; the path surface itself would not be concrete. City employees are considering aesthetics, accessibility, durability, and longevity of each surface material option.

The Universal Design Working Group (UDWG) provided the following feedback:

- Education may be needed around passing etiquette re: ringing bicycle bell as well as deaf/hard of hearing alternatives. Sight lines will be updated to ensure cyclists can see oncoming traffic. Recommended signage to promote the etiquette as well. Those who use or assist someone who uses a mobility aid may have some anxiety as a bike approaches, width should help here as well as education.
- Where possible, signage TWSI's, and/or other indicators to show connection of the path are needed.
- At the start of sections of the path, where surface type allows, dotted lines may be painted to indicate two lanes.
- They will ensure rest stops are provided along the path.
- Further engagement with this working group as the project progresses including education campaign.
- If not accessible to all then do not list it as accessible (i.e. some of the surface areas add accessibility features for some users).
- Granular surfaces (including CORE) are not great for small, hard wheels on some wheelchairs or rollerblades, cane-users may also have challenges with these surfaces.
- Granular surfaces could not be effectively snow-cleared, would either need to use surface that is accessible year-round or indicate seasons when it is accessible.
- Surface should be accessible to all.
- May need to consider the conflicts between the different users and then address these issues in a positive way.
- Think Tank may be needed for the pictograph/wayfinding so that barriers are clearly defined.
- Safety concern with speed bike users could get on asphalt surface, sightlines will help, and this surface type is better for breaking (whereas granular would allow for uncontrolled stops that could move gravel, for example).

- Concerns over the use of wood (safety, slippery during wet and winter conditions as well as on areas of slope). Also concerns for potential for rot over time.
- UDWG members feel that it is difficult to provide informed opinions/recommendations without a comprehensive graphic description of the entire path showing a cross section of elevation, areas of conflict etc.
- The presenter verbally identified several areas that pose conflicts between various forms of mobility (intersections/trailheads/flooding). How will these be resolved to safely accommodate all users? Solutions developed for areas of conflict will need to include considerations for:
  - Different light conditions (dusk vs daylight)
  - Persons using mobility devices and wheelchairs
  - Persons with vision loss (i.e.) Accessible Pedestrian Signals at crossings
  - Deaf or hearing loss – (cannot hear bike bells or voices to be warned during areas of conflict [intersections, curves, slopes with blind spots])
- UDWG was not provided a copy of the document outlining the various surface areas that are being considered for the path. A copy of this document was requested so that the IAC can review before providing recommendations.
- The concept of a multi-use path is a good one and it is important to ensure that all forms of mobility are considered (the UDWG presentation was very focused on “wheel” only).
- Is it possible to simulate/test the preferred surface area for at least a 10-foot section so that various forms of mobility can be tested (in various weather) before final decisions are made?
- This multi-use path will be precedent setting and the committee want it to be a success. Resolving areas of conflict during the design phase will help to establish multi-use paths as a viable addition to our mobility networks.

During discussion, members provided the following comments:

- The surface will make a difference to accessibility for all users. Granular pea gravel surfaces may be challenging for accessibility.
- Safety is a priority and should be considered multi-use for cross disabilities.
- The project team working on the design consists of City staff, Stantec, Tool Design Group, and Trace Consulting. Concern was expressed that the information collected is clearly laid out for the full 5 kms. Data will need to be rich and detailed enough to do a synthesis and detailed information about the components should be provided to the group for review. The path should be laid out graphically by mapping in sections with all spatial information provided. In response, Mr. Donaher noted that there is an abundance of information and a mapping tool available on the website. The next phase of the project is detailed design, and the entire pathway will be laid out in detail with plan view and cross sections. This detailed process requires information that will be gathered during the engagement process.
- It was suggested that an empathy walk could be used as a tool to provide mapping to outline and describe the conflicts so that solutions can be developed.
- The surface material report is attached to the agenda and it was requested that members review it.
- A section of the trail could be used to test accessibility on different substrates.
- Asphalt may be of concern for safety due to the breakdown over time and the maintenance required. Further review of surface material is necessary.

Since the Universal Design Working Group (UDWG) has met, the engagement process for the Kelly's Brook Path has been launched. Members were advised that engagement meetings will be scheduled for next week and resources can be found on the website at the following [link](#). Following engagement, the detailed design will be reviewed, and that section of the project will also require additional engagement with the UDWG and the Inclusion Advisory Committee.

Staff will take the recommendations from the Universal Design Working Group and formulate a Decision Note to bring back to the IAC for approval.

### **5.3 Request for Adult Playground**

In follow-up to the November 26th Inclusion Advisory Committee Meeting, the Universal Design Working Group met on January 19th to discuss the request for an Adult Playground. In attendance was Debbie Ryan, Joby Fleming, Kim Pratt-Baker, Ashley Gosse, Megan McGee, Natalie Godden, and Sherry Mercer.

Several questions were raised such as whether the playground requested is indoors or outdoors, what types of movement the person is specifically looking for, and environmental restrictions that the person may need. It was noted that the Inclusion Advisory Committee is committed to creating an inclusive community and thus a segregated space solely for adults with disabilities is not within the Committee's focus. Easter Seals currently holds a mandate to service all and has a public playground on their property as well. There was also discussion around the type of adult-sized equipment currently available in the community including the Inclusive Canadian Tire Jumpstart Playground, planned to break ground in spring 2020.

Discussion around potential need to educate the community on available equipment as well as creating welcoming spaces for people of all ages also occurred. The Working Group decided to have Sherry Mercer and Ashley Gosse reach out to the parent requesting more detail on what they are looking for. Trisha Rose was also invited given her background in accessible playground spaces.

A meeting with the City visitor (non-resident) was scheduled for January 29th. During the meeting the City visitor expressed desire for a segregated, adult-sized playground, noting that this would be a safety concern to children in the community. She was appreciative of satellite equipment at existing playgrounds, however, noting this was not what she was seeking. Environmental scans yield limited information, with similar concepts including outdoor fitness equipment or indoor parks, both of which not meeting the request. Ashley Gosse reached out to Easter Seals to determine if adult playground equipment is part of their concept build for the next stage of their outdoor activity space development. Mark Bradbury, CEO of Easter Seals NL noted their "current play structure can be reached by all levels by anyone of any size or ability. [Their] swings accommodate participants of all ages and ability along with the pirate ship. Some features that are more aligned for children are the size of [their] slides, some of the ladders and climbing pieces are normally too small for adults".



Mr. Bradbury confirmed that as a result of safety concerns, there is no plan for adult-sized slides/climbing equipment.

During discussion, it was agreed that the safety is paramount in all aspects of inclusion and this request would promote segregation rather than inclusion. The Inclusion Advisory Committee recommends that the City continue to work with members of the IAC to develop outdoor play spaces that accommodate intergenerational users of all abilities. The committee's mandate is one that fosters inclusion and universal design for all users rather than segregation.

#### **5.4 Anti-Racism Working Group Brainstorming Session**

Council recently appointed an Anti-racism position to the City's Inclusion Advisory Committee. This position will work with anti-racism practitioners, First Light representatives, individuals with lived experience of racism and City staff to develop policies and practices that support the inclusion of all citizens and visitors.

With support from community organizations, the City has also applied to the Canadian Heritage funding grant which, if successful, would support the work of the Anti-Racism Working Group for 30 months starting fall of 2021.

On January 26th, the City held an Anti-Racism Brainstorming Working Group Session tasked with identifying workplan and perspectives/qualities of appropriate organizations and individuals to form the Anti-Racism Working group. Participants included individuals with lived experience as well as the Human Rights Commission, the Internationalization Office, FFTNL, the ANC, Diversity in Theatre, MUN, the Women's Multi Cultural Association, ARC NL, the YMCA's Newcomer Women Services, Sharing Our Cultures, ACOA, Mind the Gap, and Tobolo Festival, among others. Common themes arose such as:

- The need to acknowledge the existence of racism.
- The need to provide education around what racism is, how to identify it and how to respond.
- The need to provide tools for those who feel mistreated.

A complete What We Heard document will be compiled to provide further summary of the session. The group and its respective workplan will be

finalized soon and will be shared with the members of the Inclusion Advisory Committee.

District 7820 formed the Anti-Systemic Racism Task Force. A [link](#) to this document was provided to members.

## **5.5 Healthy City Strategy Update**

The Inclusion Advisory Committee was consulted and provided feedback on the draft Healthy City Strategy on November 26th, 2020, December 1st, 2020, and December 10th, 2020. The initial draft of the Healthy City Strategy was reviewed by Council in January 2021 for their input prior to final public engagement. The first draft of the Healthy City Strategy Pillars, Goals and Implementation Strategies are listed in the information note appended to the agenda. The public consultation will be aimed at neighbourhood based initiatives that touch individuals directly, and submissions will likely consist of actions more so than implementation strategies.

Next steps were outlined as follows:

- Sign Memorandum of Understanding with Eastern Health
- Formation of Healthy City Strategy Advisory Committee (External)
- Formalize Internal City Staff – Healthy City Mobilization Team
- Public Engagement
- Final Council Approval of Strategy – September 2021

## **5.6 Emergency Preparedness**

During the November 26th meeting of the Inclusion Advisory Committee, David Day, Manager of Emergency Preparedness with the City of St. John's presented information regarding the January 2020 State of Emergency.

Mr. Day provided clarification regarding Emergency Response which is coordinated by the Province through the Emergency Services Act. As noted in the minutes, Inclusion Advisory Committee members provided feedback and were asked to bring the information back to their respective organizations for additional thought. CNIB provided the following feedback for discussion:

- Communication – the City of St. John's website is challenging to navigate, and it is difficult to know where to find accessible information.

- Would like a dedicated phoneline (not 311) that can connect everyone to all available information. E.g., different organizations who are equipped to managed complicated issues as it relates to living with a disability.
- Before another emergency occurs, pre-determined locations in place with a plan so that the resident of the city will know where they should go in case of emergency, whether it be power outages, health concerns etc., access to food or to prescriptions.

A meeting will be scheduled with David Day, Manager of Emergency Preparedness, the City's Communication and Inclusion Teams, and the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities to discuss the feedback provided and next steps. This information will be brought back to the committee for review and feedback. Members were invited to attend that meeting and those that advised they would like to attend were Dr. Sulaimon Giwa, Joby Fleming, Ashley Gosse, Debbie Ryan, Trevor Freeborn, Megan McGie, and Kim Pratt-Baker.

During discussion, the following was noted:

- Food security is of concern.
- Consideration is needed to understand the jurisdiction of municipal vs provincial.
- Cross disability groups should be consulted.
- Text can be used for the deaf community but is dependent on the individual. TTY are inaccessible for people with hearing loss and is not a private form of communication. Video Relay Service (VRS) would be preferred, and educational information can be provided by the NLAD.
- The Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (COD) Document can be used as a starting point but will need to be updated.

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Update from GoBus**

Members were provided with the following update from GoBus:

#### **RFPs**

The RFP for new On-Demand software for GoBus is nearing completion and should be published in the coming weeks.

The RFP for a new service provider is still scheduled for release in Spring 2021.

### **Assessment No-Shows**

Due to significant numbers of no-shows since November, GoBus have adjusted their communication processes slightly. Previously, customer names and contacts were sent to Horizon and they mail or email the necessary documents to the customer along with a set date/time for their assessment. They then issue a confirmation call 48 hours in advance. Under the revised procedure, customers will now receive a confirmation call 72 hours in advance of their appointment times (rather than 48). If the customer cannot be reached within 24 hours, the appointment will be cancelled, and the customer's account may be suspended until they hear from them. However, every effort will be made to avoid any interruption of service for active customers.

It was requested that the committee remind their consumers who use GoBus to cancel their assessment appointments appropriately (24 hrs) if they cannot make it and to update their contact information with GoBus regularly.

### **MVT Telephone System Upgrades**

In December, MVT upgraded their telephone system to ensure improved continuity of service during events where staff cannot get into the office (such as events like snowmageddon or in response to COVID work-from-home rules). The system also provides the ability for calls to be monitored for training purposes which is having a positive impact on customer service.

During discussion, it was requested that information regarding the requirements under the RFP for the new service provider be provided to the group prior to the release in Spring 2021. Members were invited to forward information to Natalie or Donna on this item.

## **6.2 Roundtable**

Members provided updates from their individual organizations:

### **Dr. Giwa:**

- St. John's African Roots Festival (SARFest): Screening of the movie takes place next Friday at 7pm. Members and their group or committee

are welcome to join the event. The movie to screen is Mama Africa (Mariam Makeba).

- Expert Panel Speaker Series: Reminder to Register - The Task Force is also hosting an expert panel discussion series where they will explore and discuss a number of topics related to Systemic Racism. The first moderated panel discussion is scheduled for February 22, 2021 from 6-7pm AST. This will be a Zoom session and attendees can register for the session here. After registering, they will receive a confirmation email containing the link to join the meeting. Please check spam/junk folder and then add to calendar.

**Ashley Gosse:**

- The Autism Society's social enterprise will open tomorrow. It provides a teaching environment for those who are on the spectrum to learn skills for employment. They are open for dine in, take out and catering.

**Joby Fleming:**

- Requested that the committee review accessible affordable housing. This can be added to a future agenda and City Housing staff will be invited to speak.

**Megan McGie:**

- Recommended that in Senior Housing developments there be a wing built for deaf individuals.

**Grant Genova:**

- Requested that the Inclusion Advisory Committee members bring forward perspectives from their individual organizations and communicate with each other.

**7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Inclusion Advisory Committee is scheduled for March 23, 2021.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:34 pm.

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CO-CHAIRS, JOBY FLEMING AND DR. SULAIMON GIWA