



MINUTES

SPECIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

Wednesday, 2026-FEB-18, 4:30 P.M.
Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC

- Present: Councillor H. Eastmure, Chair
Councillor S. Armstrong
L. Derksen, At Large Member
R. Harlow, At Large Member
T. Hirasawa, At Large Member
B. Kinrade, At Large Member*
J. Maffin, At Large Member*
S. Pump, At Large Member*
N. Sugiyama, At Large Member
- Absent: T. Brzovic, At Large Member
A. Dillingham-Lacoursiere, At Large Member
S. Enns, At Large Member
A. Stuart, At Large Member
- Staff: L. Bhopalsingh, General Manager, Community Services/Deputy
Chief Administrative Officer
C. Davis, Deputy Director, Parks and Natural Areas
L. Clarkson, Manager, Recreation Services
S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner
J. Knight, Capital Project Management Specialist
A. Chanakos, Zoom Moderator
K. Lundgren, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Special Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (the Committee) Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

* Denotes electronic meeting participation as authorized by "Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272"

2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:**

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS:**

(a) Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness 2025 Annual Report

Councillor Eastmure, advised the Committee that during the 2026-FEB-02 Regular Council Meeting, Council adopted the following motion:

“That Council review and accept the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness 2025 Annual Report.”

4. **PRESENTATIONS:**

(a) Maffeo Sutton Park Amenity Building

C. Davis, Deputy Director, Parks and Natural Areas, spoke regarding the Maffeo Sutton Park Amenity Building Project and advised the Committee that the proposed building design is flexible.

P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner, provided an on-screen presentation included in the agenda package. Highlights included:

- Maffeo Sutton Park is a central point on the harbour front walkway, and a new amenity building has been in consideration for this park since 2008
- The proposed amenity building will include universal, gender neutral and accessible washroom facilities

J. Knight, Capital Project Management Specialist, continued the presentation. Highlights included:

- The proposed site for the amenity building is near the Lions Pavilion, and this location was chosen based on its proximity to the waterfront walkway and to the parking area
- The proposed building will be sited on lands currently leased by the City from the Nanaimo Port Authority
- The size and location of the building is limited by the utility lines in the area

- Provided an overview of the conceptual layout plan of the proposed building layout:
 - The entrance and exits are from the north side of the building, and the south side of the building includes an optional emergency exit
 - The west side of the building includes seven daily gender neutral washrooms each with a sink and a toilet
 - The accessible washroom includes a sink, toilet and adjustable adult change table
 - The accessible washroom/family washroom includes a sink, two toilets and baby change table
 - The green room will be a space for performers who will be using the Lions Pavillion
 - There is potential for the last washroom on the west side of the building to be a park ambassador room or nursing room

P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner, requested Committee feedback on the proposed layout of the building.

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Consideration regarding the accessible toilets including transfer space on both sides of the toilet, or alternatively, that one washroom provide transfer space on the left side and the other provide transfer space on the right
- Suggestion to include water access near the adult change table
- The building will be fully conditioned with heat and air conditioning
- There is a covered area for those waiting outside the seven daily gender neutral washrooms; however, there is no covered area outside the green room due to a fire separation issue
- Suggestion to include a small-scale version of the totem pole in the area for the sharing of cultural knowledge
- Consideration for including high contrast identifiers to show if the washroom is actively being used

C. Davis, Deputy Director, Parks and Natural Areas, requested Committee feedback on a suggestion to include a window above the seven daily gender neutral stalls that would allow people to see when the light is on and the stall is occupied. They noted that for privacy reasons the doors are required to extend from top to bottom.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- There may be concerns with the visibility of the lights for some if the lights are far away or in the daylight
- A suggestion for a light on the ground provided it can be a high contrast to remain visible
- To assist in protecting these spaces during busy events, Staff have considered options such as park ambassadors and/or remote technology where individuals can request access
- The “Be My Eyes” application is a technology that helps connect visually impaired users to available washrooms
- Consideration that there is a preference for raised tactile over the use of braille for those who are visually impaired
- Currently the washroom facilities at Maffeo Sutton Park close at 9:00 p.m. (10:00 p.m. during the summer). Staff could look at extending those hours; however, an extension would result in operational and cost increases
- Often the accessible washroom is used as a change room by those swimming in the lagoon
- The inclusion of change rooms in the layout was considered; however, the location is relatively removed from the lagoon and if swimming becomes more popular in this lagoon, there may be consideration to include additional change room facilities closer to the lagoon in the future
- Privacy consideration for the urinals located in the surge gender neutral room
- Suggestions to include lips at the end of counters to prevent items from falling off as well as hooks to hang items

P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner, continued the presentation and requested Committee feedback on the accessible/family washroom. Highlights included:

- The inclusion of a built-in step stool at the sink
- Consideration for two sinks as a step stool may inhibit a wheelchair user’s access to the sink
- Consideration for the placement of soap dispensers and towels so that they can be reached

P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner, requested Committee feedback on the daily accessible washroom and noted that this washroom is slightly larger than the accessible family to accommodate the lift.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- A preference to relocating the toilet to provide space on both sides as not everyone can transfer both directions
- A 180 degree transfer is the most difficult for wheelchair users
- Placing the toilet across from the change table would be beneficial as the lift would need a single track

P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner, requested Committee feedback on the surge gender neutral washrooms and noted that these washrooms are envisioned to be opened during busier events in the park.

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Consideration for incorporating channels to accommodate cables (such as power cords from food trucks) to reduce tripping hazards
- Maffeo Sutton Park is scheduled for an accessibility audit by the Rick Hanson Foundation
- The space at the end of the surge gender neutral washroom area is envisioned as a storage area; however, the concept for this space is flexible
- As this is a gender neutral space, the doors to the washrooms will be floor to ceiling
- Consideration for the weight of the doors or including button operated doors so they can be independently opened
- Consideration for moving the baby change table from the sink area to avoid uncomfortable exchanges and sanitary concerns
- Consideration that inward swinging doors can create an obstacle when entering or exiting the stalls
- The individual washrooms sizes are similar to the washrooms recently installed at Westwood Lake Park
- Potentially using the flexible space at the end of the surge gender neutral washroom as a baby change station, and consideration for seats with buckles for those parents with toddlers and including a small bench to allow it to be used as a change room

P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner, requested Committee feedback on the green room and noted that this space is envisioned for event preparation and storage for the performers at the Lions Pavillion.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- This space will include the only available power outlets in the building
- Staff could look into the possibility of having this room as a rental space
- Staff will also be engaging with cultural key partners on this space to help accommodate their performance needs

P. Carter, Parks and Open Space Planner, advised the Committee that there is space in the southern corner of the building that could be envisioned as an additional standard washroom, a park ambassador space or a nursing room, and requested feedback from the Committee on the use of the space.

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The space in the southern corner of the building could potentially include a kiosk for a Park Ambassador
- Consideration for a low-sensory space for people feeling overwhelmed in crowds, and potential for the space to double as a nursing space
- Suggestion to avoid labelling the space as anything specific to allow for a more flexible use of the space
- Potentially including more than one change table considering the nearby playground
- Consideration for additional charging infrastructure in the park for power wheelchairs

It was moved and seconded that the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness recommend that Council direct Staff to designate the space in the southern corner of the proposed Maffeo Sutton Park amenity building layout as a flexible space that includes a change table, a sink and an armchair, without designating specifically what the space is for. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Davis, Deputy Director, Parks and Natural Areas, informed the Committee that Staff will bring forward the results and recommendations from the Maffeo Sutton Park Rick Hanson Audit to a future Committee meeting, and noted that the proposed Maffeo Sutton Park amenity building is due to be completed in the spring of 2028.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:55 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER