



## **Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)**

### **MINUTES**

A meeting of the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was held on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 12:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

**Committee Members Present:** Roger Koert – Chair Presiding, Jen Weber, Andy Mark, Joan Jones, Kathleen Barry, Jamie Pritchard, Judy Hopf, Diane Sims, Councillor Bonnie Henderson

**Staff Present:** Nathan Bottema – Project Engineer, Nolan Campbell - Engineering Design Technician, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator, Mike Mousley – Transit Manager, Nathaniel Smith – Transit Supervisor, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

**Also Present:** Mayor Martin Ritsma

#### **1. Call to Order**

Roger Koert, Chair presiding, called the AAC meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Reading of the Land Acknowledgement and a Moment of Silent Reflection.

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Policy.

#### **2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof**

None declared.

#### **3. Introduction of New and Returning Members – Judy Hopf, Kathleen Barry, Andy Mark, Joan Jones**

Members and Staff introduced themselves. Vicky Trotter highlighted this year's projects and a brief overview of meeting procedures. Ms. Trotter will e-mail the document to all members.

**4. Election of 2025/2026 Chair and Vice-Chair**

Staff declared nominations open for the 2025/26 Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Jamie Pritchard nominated Roger Koert.

Staff asked if there were any further nominations. No further nominations were made.

**Motion by** Councillor Henderson

**Seconded by** Jamie Pritchard

**THAT the nominations for the 2025/26 Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair be closed. Carried**

Roger Koert indicated that he would allow his nomination to stand.

**Motion by** Diane Sims

**Seconded by** Judy Hopf

**THAT Roger Koert be elected as the 2025/26 Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Carried**

Staff declared nominations for the 2025/26 Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee open. Andy Mark nominated Diane Sims.

Staff asked if there were any further nominations. No further nominations were made.

**Motion by** Jamie Pritchard

**Seconded by** Andy Mark

**THAT nominations for the 2025/26 Accessibility Advisory Committee Vice-Chair be closed. Carried**

Diane Sims indicated that she would allow her name to stand.

**Motion by** Jen Weber

**Seconded by** Judy Hopf

**THAT Diane Simes be elected as the 2025/26 Vice-Chair of the Accessibility Advisory Committee. Carried**

**5. Adoption of the Previous Minutes** – November 4, 2025

**Motion by** Andy Mark

**Seconded by** Jamie Pritchard

**THAT the minutes from the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting dated November 4, 2025 be adopted as printed. Carried**

**6. Stratford Transit Updates** – Nathaniel Smith, Transit Supervisor

Nathaniel Smith, Transit Supervisor, reviewed the accessibility audits of the current seven (7) bus routes.

- As part of the audits, staff has also highlighted outstanding safety issues with stops, shelters, concrete pads and sidewalks;
- Mr. Smith has created a working document that has been used over the past two years to address accessibility issues;
- As funding is available, Transit will continue adding landing pads, shelters and links to sidewalks to improve accessibility;
- There is a possibility that an additional route may be added in the future as the city expands. If this happens, staff plans to continue 30-minute service. The new transit terminal was built with an additional spot, should a route be added;

Roger Koert thanked Mr. Smith for all the effort he has put into the audits and tracking the upgrades. Mr. Koert asked that AAC members plan to attend the annual transit meeting held each November.

Councillor Henderson noted that Council included in the 2026 budget to purchase two new mobility buses to add to the fleet. It is intended the purchase will be completed in the first quarter of 2026. Transit staff will also be working towards on-demand services for same day pick ups on the mobility bus. There are currently 800 registrants who rely on the mobility bus services.

**7. Update from Council**

Councillor Henderson reported on the following budget updates from Council:

- \$500,000.00 - Council Chambers Audio-Visual and Digital Broadcasting Upgrades and Support digital access for all;
- SERC track \$700,000.00 - This project has been requested by the Accessibility Advisory Committee, user groups, and local high schools in order to make the track

at the Stratford Education and Recreation Centre site (SERC) more accessible and make it fall within the sports tourism lens. A grant was applied for in 2025, but was declined;

- Accessible spots to be added in Downie Street parking lot;
- York Street Parking Lot \$750,000.00 - Rehabilitation of the York Lot including realignment of the driveway entrances and retaining wall to facilitate better use of space, an increase in available parking spaces, and an upgraded sidewalk along the boulevard to provide an accessible access to the boulevard picnic area. Conduit to be installed as needed to support future electrical charging needs;
- Housing accessible upgrades \$75,000.00 - These projects will address barriers to accessibility including, but not limited to, scooter storage, power door openers, and ensuring entrances and exits are accessible;
- Tourism is using accessible buses to get people around for winter events - Stratford Transit to provide patrons with free and accessible hop-on-hop-off shuttle buses.

Kathleen Barry inquired about the post that blocks the sidewalk near the Boathouse where the sidewalk turns to cross the bridge. Nathan Bottema will investigate this issue.

Roger Koert welcomed Mayor Martin Ritsma and noted that he has the honour of being the first mayor to attend an AAC meeting. Mayor Ritsma visited the AAC in recognition of International Day of Persons with Disabilities and thanked members for all the work they do to improve our city. He encouraged members to keep doing the fantastic work they do.

## **8. Infrastructure Services Update**

Nathan Bottema, Project Engineer, provided the following updates:

- The contractor has completed eight (8) of the nine (9) identified intersection improvements. The last intersection improvement will be completed in the spring;
- The curb drop at Oakdale Avenue (near the ball diamond) may still be completed this year, if not will be completed in the spring;
- The Downie Street pedestrian crossover at George Street will be completed in the spring;

Jamie Pritchard inquired if staff could monitor the bump outs along the streets to have them shoveled out after it snows. The snowplows cannot get into clean the snow out well enough and the accessible parking spot on Downie Street (in front of Tourism) is at times unusable.

Jen Weber inquired if there will be lights added to the pedestrian crossover near the hospital on John Street. It is very difficult to see anyone crossing the street at night and sometimes pedestrians walk out before cars stop. Mr. Bottema noted that there is criteria, mainly volume of traffic, for whether the crossings have lights. Perhaps once all the identified crossings have been installed, staff can re-assess each area and determine if flashing lights should be added.

Jamie Pritchard noted that the City has recently been approved to do a lighting audit, so this may help with areas too.

## **9. Update from the Site Plan Review Sub-Committee**

Nolan Campbell, Engineering Design Technician, reported that the sub-committee completed reviews for the following locations:

- Two (2) locations on Wright Boulevard
- 62 Huron Street
- 225 Oak Street
- 211 St. Patrick Street
- 156 Albert Street
- 140 Shakespeare Street
- 3750 Dickens Place

## **10. Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

### **10.1 Annual Accessibility Award**

Roger Koert reported that he presented the Annual Accessibility Award at the November 24, 2025 Regular Council meeting to Stratford Intermediate School. They were truly grateful to be recognized for all the work they have put into making the school accessible.

### **10.2 Update on the Tom Patterson Island Bridge**

Diane Sims reported that she has an upcoming meeting scheduled with the Mayor to discuss how the bridge is a city asset and what steps need to be taken to improve it. Ms. Sims consistently hears from people who cannot make it over the bridge to Tom Patterson Island. The Island should be accessible for everyone, whether you use a walker, are pushing a stroller, or use a manual or electric wheelchair.

Roger Koert noted that there is community support and staff support to improve the bridge and hopefully this project can be completed soon. Nathan Bottema is currently drafting a report discussing alternatives.

Mayor Ritsma inquired if once you get onto the island, are there accessibility improvements that need to be made. Mr. Bottema stated that this would be a further discussion with the Community Services staff. Roger Koert noted that the mobi-mats should be used this winter. Mr. Koert will contact Community Services to inquire.

## **11. New Business**

### **11.1 AAC Name Tags**

Vicky Trotter discussed that when members are doing events, such as the retirement home visits they did this summer, name tags would be helpful to identify members as part of the AAC. Members would like to proceed with name tags. Ms. Trotter will bring in an example to the January meeting for members to see.

### **11.2 Remuneration for AAC Members as of January 1, 2026**

Vicky Trotter sent members a memo in September outlining that AAC members would receive remuneration for attending meetings. Members will receive \$125.00 per committee meeting and \$50.00 per site plan review meeting, which are held online. This will begin in January 2026, with two payments per year (Jan-June and July-Dec). Ms. Trotter will provide all members with forms to fill out in January. Roger Koert noted that with payment, comes a level of expectation for members to be present for meetings.

### **11.3 Winter Wonderland Weekend**

Jamie Pritchard reported that the train at Winter Wonderland Weekend had an accessible car added to it this year. Mr. Pritchard worked very hard to get the accessible car added and was thrilled to see a young child light up when he realized he could ride the train this year!

## **12. Date of Next Meeting**

The next AAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 – Rotary Complex, Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

**13. Adjournment**

**Motion by** Jamie Pritchard

**Seconded by** Councillor Henderson

**THAT the December 2, 2025 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting adjourn.**

Start Time: 12:00 P.M.

End Time: 1:14 P.M.