



Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

MINUTES

A meeting of the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was held on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, 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, Kathleen Barry, Jamie Pritchard, Judy Hopf, Diane Sims, Councillor Bonnie Henderson

Staff Present: Nolan Campbell - Engineering Design Technician, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Also Present: Mayor Martin Ritsma

Regrets: Joan Jones, Nathan Bottema – Manager of Engineering

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. Adoption of the Previous Minutes – December 2, 2025

Motion by Jen Weber

Seconded by Judy Hopf

THAT the minutes from the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting dated December 2, 2025 be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Update from Council

Councillor Henderson provided the following update from the December 8, 2025 Council meeting:

- The development at 16 Kastner Street will have (74) units, (4) units will be accessible and there will be (5) accessible parking spots;

5. Infrastructure Services Update

Nolan Campbell, Engineering Design Technician, reported there were no new engineering updates. As discussed at the previous AAC meeting, Nathan Bottema has contacted Public Works staff to inquire about areas not getting cleared of snow. After being made aware of the concerns, Public Works has completed some site identification for additional snow clearing.

6. Update from the Site Plan Review Sub-Committee

Nolan Campbell, Engineering Design Technician, reported that the sub-committee completed reviews of the following site plans:

- 976 Erie Street
- 4117 Perth Line 36
- 827 Erie Street
- 600 Orr Street
- 963 O'Loane Avenue
- 232 Lorne Avenue
- 361 Wright Boulevard
- 107 Monteith Avenue
- 55 Queen Street

7. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

7.1 Mobi-Mats Update

Roger Koert reported that the mobi-mats have been installed on Tom Patterson Island for the Lights On Stratford display. They appeared to be working well, the snow was packed around them when he visited.

Andy Mark inquired if there was an uptick in demand for the mobi-mats since the City purchased them. Roger Koert indicated that there was not necessarily a way

of knowing if demand has increased, but there has been opportunity for event organizers to request to use them. The request for mobi-mats is on the special event application form if organizers are interested. Jamie Pritchard inquired if Mike Beitz could post some information on social media to let people know they are available to use to help make their events more accessible. Mr. Koert has some photos and video of the mobi-mats on Tom Patterson Island.

Vicky Trotter explained that when a special event application is filed, it gets circulated to many departments for their review. Ms. Trotter suggested that perhaps it could be circulated to her for members of the AAC to comment and make suggestions as part of the process.

Ms. Trotter will forward a copy of a special event application for AAC members to review and provide comments.

Members inquired if organizers are also required to have a certain number of accessible washrooms available depending on the size of the event. Ms. Trotter stated that at this point, it is not a mandatory requirement for organizers. Councillor Henderson suggested that the AAC could ask that at least one accessible washroom be available for all events.

Motion by Councillor Henderson

Seconded by Kathleen Barry

THAT the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends that Council require all special event organizers to include a minimum of 1 (one) accessible portable washroom when washroom rentals are required for an event being held on City property. Carried

7.2 AAC Name Tags

As discussed at the previous AAC meeting, Vicky Trotter provided a sample of a name tag used by another committee. The name tag is magnetic, as opposed to pinning it on. Ms. Trotter inquired if members would like to have their names on them or "Accessibility Advisory Committee." Members confirmed they would prefer their first and last names printed on the tags and will send exact spelling of what they want on their name tag to Ms. Trotter.

Roger Koert discussed the idea of having an AAC logo to use on the name tags and any other AAC promotional items. Mr. Koert suggested the logo should be black and white for accessibility. Ms. Trotter will contact Mike Beitz to inquire

about creating a draft logo. Mr. Koert will share the draft logo that he created for consideration too.

Motion by Jamie Pritchard

Seconded by Jen Weber

THAT the Accessibility Advisory Committee spends up to a maximum of \$200.00 to purchase AAC name tags for committee members and staff liaisons and work with staff to develop a draft committee logo. Carried

Ms. Trotter will work to have a draft of the name tags for the February AAC meeting for members to see prior to ordering.

7.3 Update on the Tom Patterson Bridge

Mayor Ritsma informed members that there are ongoing discussions regarding the accessibility of the bridge and will share updates when they become available. Diane Sims reported that she has e-mailed a representative from the Stratford Festival asking for assistance with the bridge, as it is for the Tom Patterson Island and mere steps from the theatres. The Theatre has offered their support for the new bridge.

7.4 Update on AAC Motions

Vicky Trotter provided the AAC members with a written update on outstanding motions and provided these additional updates at the meeting:

- The AAC promotional items have arrived and Ms. Trotter brought samples to the meeting for members to see;
- Regarding the motion from September 5, 2023 requesting a new accessible access and viewing area at the parkland adjacent to the Bandshell on Veteran's Drive – previous funding from a private donor (\$50,000.00) has unfortunately fallen through and is no longer an option. However, there is a grant opportunity through the Rick Hansen Foundation in the amount of \$40,000.00. If the committee is successful in receiving funding, they may have to ask Council for the additional funds or get approval to use extra funds out of the Engineering Accessibility budget line. Ms. Trotter can confirm that Stratford qualifies for the grant and can proceed with the application once approved by Council to do so. Members supported applying for the grant to assist in completing this project. Ms. Trotter will begin preliminary work on the application and request approval from Council.

Councillor Henderson stated that there has been previous discussion on possibly installing an accessible parking spot at the bottom of Cobourg Street. Could some consideration be given to installing a sidewalk from Cobourg Street to the viewing platform area.

8. New Business

8.1 Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

Vicky Trotter shared a presentation with the Committee regarding the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program. Ms. Trotter reached out to the City of Ajax, as they have implemented the program and provided the presentation information. The program is run out of the UK and that is where the main contact would be and where supplies would be shipped from. There is an annual membership fee for the program. The 2025 annual fee for a professional membership (which the City of Stratford would require) was \$1,550.00. Pins, lanyards and bracelets are an additional cost. Taxes, shipping and duty are charged for all items, as they are shipped from the UK. There is also a mailing cost for citizens requesting items. There are costs involved for launch advertising, facility decals, front counter displays and staff time.

Ms. Trotter will e-mail AAC members the presentation for their information.

Kathleen Barry thanked Ms. Trotter for all the information provided and was surprised at the costs involved in participating in the program. Members discussed the value in identifying people with a hidden disability and could the AAC give out sunflower items on their own. Ms. Trotter will inquire if this is possible and if there are any legal implications.

8.2 Review of 2025 AAC Annual Report to Council

AAC members were provided a copy of the draft AAC 2025 Annual Report to Council for their review and feedback prior to being submitted to Council.

Diane Sims suggested adding that the accessible ramp at the police station was installed in 2025, meeting AODA compliance. Vicky Trotter will add this item into the report under accomplishments.

8.3 Purchasing Accessible Sports Equipment

Jen Weber inquired if the AAC would be interested in possibly advocating for the City to purchase accessible sports equipment for people to use. Ms. Weber

recently participated in an event where the U13 Warriors tried sledge hockey. Organizers borrowed (16) sledges for the team to try it out. Ms. Weber has received feedback from people inquiring why Stratford does not have items, such as sledges, on hand for people to borrow and try. Ms. Weber estimated the cost of a sledge would be approximately \$600-\$800 to purchase.

There was a recent article in the Beacon Herald and Ms. Weber will forward it to AAC members read.

Members suggested that a variety of accessible recreational equipment could be considered, such as water wheelchairs for the Lion's Pool. Councillor Henderson suggested that in 2026, the AAC could look at how Stratford can make their City more accessible for all sports. Staff would have to give consideration to the cost for purchasing the items, storage, maintenance and liability. Currently, sledges are not permitted during public skates, so this would need to be considered.

Jamie Pritchard suggested contacting Destination Stratford to consider as part of their sport tourism initiative. Nolan Campbell also suggested that partnering with the County of Perth might make something like this more viable.

8.4 2nd Annual Primary Care and Homecare Symposium

Roger Koert stated that the symposium will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at the Stratford Country Club and Mr. Koert will be speaking at the event. The theme for this year's event is "making homecare essential to healthcare." The symposium is free to attend; however you must get a ticket online through Eventbrite. Once tickets become available, Mr. Koert will forward the link.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next AAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 – Rotary Complex, Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

10. Adjournment

Motion by Jen Weber

Seconded by Judy Hopf

THAT the January 6, 2026 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting adjourn.

Start Time: 12:00 P.M.

End Time: 1:26 P.M.