



## **Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 1:00 p.m.**

**Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre**

**700 River Street**

### **1. Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting 06-2025**

Vice-Chair: John Gobeil

### **2. Members**

John Gobeil, Developmental Disability Representative

Councillor Brian Hamilton, Council Representative

Todd Kennedy, Service Agency Representative

Tara Lennox, Learning Disability Representative

Robert Tinsley, Citizen Representative

Tessa Soderberg, Citizen Representative

John Wheeler, Mobility Disability Representative

### **3. Officials**

Gordon Stover, Committee & Meeting Management System Coordinator

### **4. Guests**

Matthew Lawrence, Mobility Coordinator

Jessy Bogacki, Program Supervisor - Adult Fitness, Wellness & Inclusion Services

### **5. Welcome and Introductions**

Vice-Chair John Gobeil called the meeting to order and a roundtable of introductions followed.

**6. Communication Process**

Tara Lennox agreed to manage the speaker's list.

**7. Disclosures**

None.

**8. Agenda Approval**

MOVED BY: Tara Lennox

SECONDED BY: Robert Tinsley

WITH RESPECT to the November 12, 2025 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, we recommend that the Agenda as printed, including any additional information and new business be confirmed.

CARRIED

**9. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of Meeting 04-2025 and 05-2025 of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, held on September 10, 2025 and October 8, 2025 respectively, to be confirmed.

MOVED BY: Robert Tinsley

SECONDED BY: Tara Lennox

THAT Minutes of Meeting 04-2025 and 05-2025 of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, held on September 10, 2025 and October 8, 2025, be confirmed.

CARRIED

**10. Patio Placement in the North Core**

Purpose: Consultation

Memorandum dated October 23, 2025 from Mobility Coordinator Matthew Lawrence requesting an opportunity to consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee regarding the change in restaurant patio seating locations from roadway to curbed areas. The North Core Street Scape Project incorporated various accessibility interventions, but with the project now complete, engineering

is seeking experienced opinions from Accessibility Advisory Committee members who have navigated the area firsthand.

Matthew Lawrence, Mobility Coordinator appeared before Committee, provided an overview relative to requests from Businesses to change the acceptable location of Pop-Up Patios from next to the street to adjacent to the building, and responded to questions.

Discussion was held relative to the above noted. Some of the items discussed as follows:

- Administration has received requests to allow patios adjacent to a building. The current location, which is next to the curb and on the opposite side of the sidewalk from a building, requires Wait Staff to cross the sidewalk in front of pedestrians with trays of food and/or beverages.
- The application process requires a site plan to be provided prior to approval
- The AAC would like to visit the location
  - The AAC reviewed the plans before, what is the new process?
  - Will barriers around the patio area be used?
    - Barriers around the patio help keep tables and chairs contained and off the walking path;
      - people moving chairs and tables will interfere with pedestrians
    - Barriers at the roadway, where pedestrians would be re-routed around the patio, will help to keep pedestrians safe
  - Will there be sufficient space for a patio next to the building which will allow people to walk around the patio without having to leave the sidewalk
  - There needs to be enough space for the public to access stores and restaurants, including individuals utilizing mobility devices
  - Built Environment Working Group would like to do a site visit
    - Administration will work with the BEWG Members to schedule a site visit in the Spring 2026

## **11. Roundtable of Accessibility Issues**

Members reported the following accessibility issues.

### **11.1 Committee Vacancies and Absences**

Discussion was held relative to lack/loss of quorum at monthly meetings. Some of the items discussed as follows:

- Request that Administration reach out to the Members who are frequently absent from meetings to confirm their commitment, as per the Committees Terms of Reference.
- Annual review of the Terms of Reference is scheduled for January 8, 2026
  - review the current Committee composition
    - Terms of Reference updated March 12, 2025 were reviewed by the Committee and subsequently ratified by Council on April 9, 2025

### **11.2 Transit Services - Lift +**

Discussion was held relative to concerns relating to Conventional and Lift + Transit services. Some of the items discussed as follows:

- When will the new booking software be launched
  - It is extremely difficult to book rides with Lift +
- Additional accessibility training and re-training is required for Lift + drivers
- Will Buses return to Red River and Court Street?
- Will the Bus Stop at Donald St. and Archibald St. return to service?
- A Community Action Group is focusing on issues related to Transit Services and other city services

### **11.3 Blocked Sidewalk**

At the October 8, 2025 Members advised that the sidewalk running West to East on the South Side of Brock Street in front of George Jeffrey's Children's Centre is blocked by a fence and a pile of dirt around the Hydro Pole, with no alternate path of travel or barrier around the dirt pile.

Administration will reach out to Synergy North to request that appropriate barriers and an alternate path of travel be provided.

#### **11.4 Accessible Ramp**

A Member noted there is no accessible ramp to access the sidewalk and enter Stacked Pancake & Breakfast House.

#### **11.5 Taxi Services**

A Member shared concerns raised by a citizen after they used a local taxi company's service where the Fee Meter was started by the Operator before the citizens mobility device was secured in the vehicle and the ride commenced. The citizen would like to know who to contact to make a complaint and to request the additional fare that was charged to be refunded.

Administration will reach out to By-Law Enforcement for information.

The meeting recessed at 2:00 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 2:10 p.m.

#### **11.6 First Layer Paving at Curb Cuts during Construction**

Discussion was held relative to First Layer Paving at Curb Cuts during construction. Some of the items discussed as follows:

When only the first (base) layer of paving has been installed, the pavement surface often sits below the finished grade that the final roadway or sidewalk will reach. At curb cuts—areas designed to provide smooth, accessible transitions for wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, and others—this incomplete condition can create a temporary drop-off between the end of the curb ramp and the adjacent pavement.

Because the paving has not yet been built up to the level of the curb cut, the curb ramp does not connect flush with the roadway or path. This results in a vertical gap or step, which means the curb cut is not accessible during this stage of construction. The area may appear finished from the top of the ramp.

Although this condition is temporary and will be resolved once the intermediate and final pavement layers are placed, bringing the pavement up to the correct elevation and creating a fully accessible, slope-free connection between the curb cut and the adjacent surface, it would be

best practice to fill this gap in the interim.

## **12. Working Group Updates**

### **12.1 Built Environment Working Group**

Customer Service Counter - Thunder Bay 55+ Centre

Members of the BEWG met with Administration at the Thunder Bay 55+ Centre on Monday, November 10, 2025 to review plans for a new customer service counter at the Thunder Bay 55+ Centre.

The current configuration has a lowered accessible section located at the end of the counter, directly in front of one computer workspace, with a Plexi glass barrier, and an additional computer workspace at the opposite end of the counter.

The new configuration includes a lower section in the middle of the customer service counter with additional leg room, no Plexi glass, and the computer workspaces will be located on either side of the accessible counter.

## **13. 2026 Meeting Schedule**

Meetings of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be scheduled from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the West Thunder Community Centre, 915 Edward Street.

Thursday, January 8, 2026

Thursday, February 12, 2026

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Thursday, April 9, 2026

Thursday, May 14, 2026

Thursday June 11, 2026

Thursday, September 10, 2026

Committees of Council will not meet in October and November due to the 2026 Municipal Election. A meeting may be scheduled if Administration needs to review projects or provide information.

## **15. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.