

Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee 2025 Annual Report

Introduction

The Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee (RAAC) was established in 2023. The RAAC acts as a resource and provides advice to Council to support the advancement of accessibility in the city, so that people with disabilities are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life. Through ongoing discussion and knowledge sharing, the RAAC assists with identifying accessibility barriers in the community and advises the City on how to remove and prevent these barriers. This ensures the Committee's work is consistent with related requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. To support the alignment of the City's and Library's efforts to advance accessibility in Richmond, a representative from Richmond Public Library participates as a member of the RAAC.

2025 Membership

The RAAC is comprised of up to 12 Council-appointed voting members, consisting of eight citizen representatives and four organization representatives, representing Aspire Richmond, Pathways Clubhouse, Richmond Centre for Disability and Vancouver Coastal Health. Following the resignation of the Youth Representative in January 2025, the Committee began its work in 2025 with 11 voting members. A new Youth Representative was appointed to the RAAC in May 2025, bringing the RAAC to its full complement of 12 voting members for the remainder of the year.

Citizen Appointees

- Rob Sleath, Chair
- Deborah Ling, Vice-Chair
- Melanie Arnis, Citizen Member
- Pam Andrews, Citizen Member
- Tommy Leung, Citizen Member
- Mark Downey, Citizen Member
- Richard Marion, Citizen Member
- Nat Ho, Citizen Member (as of May 2025)

Organizational Representatives

- Cindy Larden, Vancouver Coastal Health
- Laura Clarke, Pathways Clubhouse
- Ian Yeung, Richmond Centre for Disability
- Sue Jones, Aspire Richmond

The RAAC also included three non-voting representatives. The non-voting members included:

- Councillor Bill McNulty, Council Liaison
- Melanie Burner, Program Manager, Social Development, Staff Liaison
- Ariana Galeano, Richmond Public Library Liaison

2025 Highlights

The RAAC held 10 meetings in 2025, with no meetings scheduled in August and December. The Committee provided accessibility input on a number of City and community initiatives to help enhance accessibility in Richmond. The RAAC also identified a wide range of issues and barriers experienced by people with disabilities in the community and offered advice on how to remove and prevent these barriers. The Committee served as both an advisory committee and as a forum for information sharing between the City, local non-profits and accessibility advisory committees from other municipalities in British Columbia (BC). Highlights of the RAAC's 2025 meetings included:

1) Providing accessibility feedback on City initiatives

The RAAC provided accessibility feedback on a number of City initiatives, including the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) Targeted Update and the draft Social Development Strategy (2025–2035). The Committee also reviewed and advised on the accessibility features of the proposed Garden City Park Gathering Space design as well as a potential Memorial Garden in Richmond. In particular, the RAAC was engaged in the development of the new Commemorative Crosswalk that was installed at No. 3 Road and Anderson Road. The Committee applied an accessibility lens to the design of the crosswalk to ensure the crosswalk is accessible for individuals with sensory and cognitive disabilities.

2) Applying an accessibility lens to Community initiatives

The RAAC provided input to enhance the accessibility of several community initiatives in 2025 including the inaugural OneAbility Games, which will be held in May 2026 at the Richmond Olympic Oval. The Committee also participated in a guided tour of Richmond Art Gallery exhibition titled Speak No (emergency) that featured a number of accessibility enhancements, including artwork labels with QR codes linking to audio descriptions, braille labels and a tactile art piece. The Committee shared feedback and learnings from their tour with Gallery staff to support the enhancement of accessibility of future exhibitions.

3) Identifying accessibility barriers in the community

The RAAC actively identified accessibility barriers experienced by people with disabilities in Richmond and advised the City on ways to remove and prevent these barriers. One issue identified by the Committee was the placement of garbage cans directly below the braille signage located on bus stop sign posts, with the issue identified at approximately 100 bus stops across Richmond. The Committee advised the City on how to eliminate this barrier and work is ongoing to address the issue at the affected bus stops. The Committee engaged in ongoing discussions about opportunities to enhance the accessibility of floating and mid-point bus stops across the city.

Additionally, the Committee identified opportunities to address attitudinal barriers experienced by people with disabilities and supported efforts to increase awareness and understanding in the community and among City staff. This included providing input on and participating in the City's National AccessAbility Week initiatives as well as identifying training opportunities to support City staff when interacting with persons with sight loss.

4) Representing RAAC at the inaugural BC Municipal Accessibility Network Conference

A RAAC member participated in a panel discussion at the inaugural BC Municipal Accessibility Network Conference titled "Committee to Collaboration: Working in Right Relationship". This panel featured representatives from municipal accessibility advisory committees who shared highlights from their respective committees' work to enhance accessibility.

Presentations

The RAAC hosted monthly guest speakers to highlight new City strategies and initiatives and provide opportunities for feedback to advance accessibility across City planning and operations.

- **January – Committee Orientation**

Melanie Burner (Program Manager, Social Development, City of Richmond) led a committee orientation and presented an overview of the RAAC mandate, terms of reference and member roles and responsibilities.

- **February – Transportation Updates**

Lloyd Bie (Director, Transportation, City of Richmond) discussed transportation-related items with the Committee, including the use of Leading Pedestrian Intervals in Richmond and the design of the buffer strip that delineates the transition between the plaza and the bike lane at Capstan Station.

- **March – Guided Tour of Richmond Art Gallery Exhibit Speak No (emergency)**

Shaun Dacey (Director, Richmond Art Gallery, City of Richmond) and Zoë Chan (Curator, Richmond Art Gallery, City of Richmond) led committee members on a guided tour of the Richmond Art Gallery exhibit Speak No (emergency).

- **April – Emergency Planning at the City of Richmond**

Brennan MacLachlan (Program Manager, Emergency Planning, City of Richmond) presented on emergency planning at the City, including how the emergency plans account for the needs of people with disabilities.

- **May – Recreation and Sport Services at the City of Richmond**

Debi Jones (Coordinator, Leisure Services, City of Richmond), Donna Bishop (Fitness and Wellness Leader, City of Richmond) and Loryn Legear (Community Facilities Coordinator, City of Richmond) presented on accessible features in recreation programs offered at community facilities.

- **June – Official Community Plan (OCP) Targeted Update**

Minhee Park (Planner 3, Policy Planning, City of Richmond) and Emily Huang (Planner 2, Policy Planning, City of Richmond) presented the OCP targeted update for Committee feedback, with a focus on how an equity lens and accessibility framework is being incorporated into land use planning at the City.

- **July – Seniors Strategy and Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Groups**

Niloofar Hedayati (Planner 1, Seniors, Community Social Development, City of Richmond) presented findings from the City's 2024 Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Group projects and highlighted the connections between age-friendly planning and accessibility considerations.

- **September – Garden City Park Gathering Space, OneAbility Games**

Yihong Liao (Park Planner, Parks Service, City of Richmond) shared the proposed design for the Garden City Park Gathering Space for Committee feedback on the design's accessibility.

Andrea Carey (Director of Games, OneAbility Games) and Jessica Kruger (Community Engagement Coordinator, OneAbility Games) presented on the inaugural OneAbility Games, which will feature competitive and recreational sports for people with disabilities.

- **October – Draft Social Development Strategy (2025–2035)**

Dorothy Jo (Program Manager, Social Planning, Community Social Development, City of Richmond) and Jyotika Dangwal (Research Planner 2, Community Social Development, City of Richmond) presented the Social Development Strategy for accessibility input and engagement.

- **November – Housing Office**

Peter Russell (Director, Housing, City of Richmond) and Victor Tran (Program Manager, Housing Policy, City of Richmond) provided an overview of the Housing Office and affordable, accessible housing in Richmond.

During each meeting held in 2025, the RAAC designated time to discuss barriers that they or individuals they support have identified in the community, as well as potential ways to remove and prevent these barriers. Areas of concern identified by the Committee were forwarded to the appropriate City departments for resolution.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

Throughout 2025, the Committee has been honoured to represent a broad and diverse range of disability perspectives in Richmond and remains committed to supporting the City in meeting the legislative requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. We would like to thank City Council for their support of the RAAC, as well as to express our gratitude to City staff for

addressing the RAAC's feedback on accessibility barriers in the community. We look forward to continuing to make Richmond more accessible and inclusive through our work in 2026.

Submitted by:

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Committee*

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