



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

ESTABLISHMENT AND AUTHORITY

Select Committees of Council are established under the authority of Section 142 of the *Community Charter*. Membership must include at least one individual from Council. It is the general purpose of select committees to inquire into any matter and to report its findings and recommendations to the Council for determination. Select Committee terms are typically finite, and their purposes are focused and task-oriented.

An Accessibility Committee must be established under the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, Section 9(1), to assist the municipality to identify barriers to individuals in or interacting with the municipality and advise the municipality on how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the municipality.

MANDATE

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will work collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility and inclusion focusing on the experiences of people with disabilities, encompassing the whole community. The Committee will provide advice to Council on strategies to reduce social, physical, and sensory barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of community life. People with disabilities will be an active part of this work.

Advisory Committee members are expected to bring a wide range of nonpartisan views and experience with disability issues to ensure that Council hears the widest possible perspective.

The Advisory Committee will provide a cross-disability perspective on disability issues and not the perspective of the disability groups with which members may be involved.

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

The Advisory Committee is an advisory body to the Mayor and Council on disability issues that does not duplicate the role of community advocates. The Advisory Committee is expected to engage in a broader reflection on issues and develop some consensus regarding public policy advice relating to people with disabilities. Committee members, therefore, need to be not only cognizant of issues and concerns of the disability community but also need to be able to apply this understanding within a public policy context.

The Advisory Committee will have three primary functions:

- To convey knowledge and understanding of disability issues to local and provincial government;
- to advise the local government as it establishes priorities, develops policies, and plans and implements programs; and
- to establish and maintain ongoing consultation with the disability community. This is to be accomplished through informal contact made by individual members and possibly through more formal consultations with the disability community.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

City Council shall appoint a member of Council to be the Chair of the Committee. An Alternate Chair will be selected by the members of the committee in the event of an absence.

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the committee, preserve order, and decide all points of order.

TERM

The term of the Committee shall commence upon approval of the Terms of Reference document and terminate upon the sooner of:

- December 31, 2026;
- A resolution of the City of Duncan.

MEMBERSHIP

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall consist of seven (7) voting members appointed by City Council, with the composition aligning with the requirements of the *Accessible British Columbia Act* as follows:

- One Council member
- One member from the Clements Centre Society
- One member from the Cowichan Independent Living Society
- One member from Literacy Now – Cowichan
- One member from the Valley Seniors Organization of Duncan
- One member from the Vancouver Islands Providence Community Association
- One member at-large

As per the *Accessible BC Act*, Committee membership should include half of the representatives be people with disabilities or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support people with disabilities, and at least one of the committee members should be an Indigenous person. The Committee should reflect the diversity of people in British Columbia. Particular attention will be paid to ensure a cross-disability perspective.

The Corporate Services Coordinator shall be appointed as the staff liaison and recording secretary to the Committee. Other City department staff will be referred to as needed.

Appointments to the Committee must be made by Council and shall be effective until its disbandment. Should a Committee member resign, replacement members must also be appointed by Council.

REMUNERATION

Advisory Committee members serve as volunteers and shall serve without remuneration. Committee meeting expenses shall be undertaken by the City of Duncan, as deemed acceptable.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Advisory Committee members are expected to attend meetings regularly. If a member is continuously absent from committee meetings for a period of three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings, unless the absence is because of illness, the member is deemed removed and Council may proceed to replace that member. If an Advisory Committee member finds it necessary to resign from the Committee, a letter to that effect should be sent to the Chair of the Advisory Committee and copied to the Recording Secretary.

City Council shall have the power to remove any member of the Committee from office at any time.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Advisory Committee members shall absent themselves from discussions or decision-making at Committee meetings if there is a potential conflict of interest, and this shall be recorded in the Minutes of Committee meetings.

Advisory Committee members shall not knowingly take advantage of, or benefit from, information that is obtained through their Committee duties and responsibilities and which is not generally available to the public.

Any member whose personal or financial interest could conflict with the subject matter discussed should immediately disclose this information.

As soon as a potential conflict of interest arises, the member will declare it for discussion and recording, after which the member will vacate the meeting for the discussion and vote.

SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-committees may only be formed with Council approval and must have a terms of reference developed to define its purpose.

WORKING GROUPS

There may be merit in establishing smaller working groups with a very specific mandate to work on special projects if the need arises. If this approach is adopted, then the Committee, via resolution, would identify select members of the Committee to work on the Committee's directive and report back its findings or work to the AAC Committee.

The difference between a Sub Committee vs. a Working Group is in the focused nature of the group's directive and its temporary status.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Advisory Committee members may be privy to confidential material and as such are expected to sign a "Conflict of Interest/Confidentiality Form."

Should a closed meeting be held by the Committee, members must keep in confidence, any information considered in any part of said meeting until such time as the information is released to the public as lawfully authorized or required. Should the municipality suffer loss or damage due to contravention of confidentiality, the municipality may recover damages from the person(s) for the loss or damage.

MEETING PROCEDURES:

The Advisory Committee will meet a minimum once per year and additional meetings will be held at the call of the Chair.

The location of meetings will be at the City of Duncan Committee Room.

All Committee meetings will be conducted in an orderly and business-like manner abiding consistent with the City of Duncan Procedure Bylaw, as amended or replaced from time to time.

Meetings are open to the public unless otherwise posted as a closed meeting per S. 90 of the *Community Charter*.

Quorum shall consist of four (4) members.

All Committee meetings shall commence at the stated time.

The conduct of meetings shall enable members of the committee to consider information presented, weigh evidence related thereto, and make informed decisions in a democratic, consensually driven environment. Each member shall have one vote and will respect the following rules of meeting conduct:

- Group discussion is important; everyone participates;
- Provide honest, open opinions;
- Agree to disagree; consensus may not always be achieved;
- Promise to stay on track and on topic, and
- Promise of anonymity; names are not associated with comments.

Discussions/deliberations related to any matter requiring a decision by the committee must not be discussed via email. The information must be submitted to the Chair and staff liaison for inclusion on the agenda.

Informal information exchanges between Committee members via email is permitted.

AGENDAS

The Chairperson in collaboration with the staff liaison shall prepare an Agenda for each meeting. Agenda items and supporting material must be submitted to the Chair with a copy to the staff liaison prior to the agenda cut-off in order to be placed on the Committee agenda, as per Council's Procedure Bylaw. Late items (after the agenda has been circulated) will only be considered if the item is emergent in nature and cannot wait until the next meeting. Acceptance of late items must be approved by the majority of the Committee members. Agendas will be circulated to each Committee member via email.

MINUTES

Minutes for the Advisory Committee meetings will be prepared by a City of Duncan staff member in accordance with Council's Procedure Bylaw. Resolutions from the Committee will be forwarded to Council for consideration.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor is the official spokesperson on Council business or matters before Council. The Committee Chair may be asked by the Mayor to be the spokesperson on matters within the Committee's purview.

On technical matters, or where the status is still at the staff proposal level, the Chief Administrative Officer or senior staff may be the appropriate spokesperson.