# Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting held November 1, 2022

A meeting of the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee is held this day commencing at 10:00 o'clock a.m. via Zoom video conference, there being present the following members:

Sally Bennett Olczak, Co-Chair
Peter Best, Co-Chair
Councillor Ed Sleiman
Surendra Bagga (arrives at 10:18 a.m.)
Sheila McCabe
Nicholas Petro
Caleb Ray

**Regrets received from:**

Riccardo Pappini

**Also present are the following resource personnel:**

Gayle Jones, Accessibility/Diversity Officer
Wadah Al-Yassiri, Manager Parks Development
Laura Ash, Supervisor Parks Projects
Shawna Boakes, Executive Director Operations
Shauna Boghean, Mobility Specialist, CNIB
Trevor Duquette, Supervisor Parks Projects
Mark Keeler, Human Resources Assistant
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

## 1. Call to Order

S. Bennett Olczak, Co-Chair calls the meeting to order at 10:03 o'clock a.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

## 2. Declaration of Conflict

None disclosed.

## 3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by C. Ray,
That the minutes of the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee of its meeting held May 10, 2022 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

## 4. Presentations

### 4.1 Parks Improvements – Updates and Accessibility Input

### a) Stodgell Park Accessible Pathway and Playground Projects

Wadah Al-Yassiri, Manager, Parks Development is present and provides the following comments relating to the Stodgell Park accessible pathway playground projects:

- Will be adding a multiuse recreational trail beside the Stodgell Park playground and the parking lot with adherence to FADS and the AODA and hoping to exceed those standards relating to the longitudinal slope and cross slope.
- The multiuse trail will cross into the right-of-way and will be installing tactile tiles.
- In terms of the playground projects, he refers to a resident living near Alton Park who advocates for accessibility. A meeting was held with this resident and the Project Manager along with the playground supplier and comments were provided by the resident relating to the design and what he would like to see.
- It was decided to add an additional accessible swing at Alton Park due to the demographics as was advised by the resident.
- He refers to Alexander Park and suggests the addition of an accessible pathway from the riverfront to the washroom to specifically help people in wheelchairs. Working on cost estimates for this project. In the future, may request funding or cost sharing from WAAC.
- He suggests purchasing one accessible swing and an accessible “saucer” which can be used by people in wheelchairs and notes that they may reach out to WAAC for funding in the future. He asks what accessible features can be added to a splash pad.

G. Jones remarks that it was very good that W. Al-Yassiri was able to speak to the resident regarding the accessibility features that potentially could be put into Alton Park. It was noted that whenever we can be seeking thorough early consultation from WAAC and from the public, we want to ensure that the additional seventeen parks will have accessible features to meet the needs of everybody.

In response to a question asked by S. McCabe regarding the location of Stodgell Park and to ensure it is accessible, T. Duquette responds the park is located at Seneca and Kildare and adds that a ten foot trail is to be constructed.

N. Petro inquires about the accessible pathway going from the riverfront to the washroom at Alexander Park and questions if there is a sufficient path on all sides of the parking lot.

W. Al-Yassiri responds that the design is preliminary and pending the receipt of additional information including cost estimates, the information will be shared with WAAC.

P. Best suggests that when planning retrofits to parks, that WAAC or those with accessibility knowledge be involved early in the process.

## 5. Business Items

### 5.1 Audio Pedestrian Signals (APS) Update

Shawna Boakes, Executive Director Operations appears before the Committee and provide the following overview and comments:

- Met with members of WAAC and G. Jones along with Shauna Boghean, CNIB for a site visit at the corner of Lauzon and Wyandotte. The audio pedestrian signal located at this intersection is approximately thirteen years old with seven years of functional life left. The APS signal at this location was a much older model with some functionality in those buttons that have been updated in more recent versions of the APS models that are currently available.
- The group discussed the location of buttons, locations of crosswalks and accessibility as a whole with respect to traffic signals. Some of the traffic signals were installed well before the provincially legislated requirement was put in place for the APS and the accessibility in general.
- There have been major upgrades at specific locations as opposed to smaller changes at the intersections. There are currently 293 signals.
- The group who attended the site visit were asked for a list of locations and particulars, i.e. highly utilized areas for accessible persons.
- Any new APS are being installed with the new accessible standards.
- Are in the process of preparing a design standard for accessibility which includes a physical layout of an intersection, where the push buttons are located, where the poles are located, where the crosswalks, ramps and the tactile plates are located and the design standard for the actual audible push button itself.
- The intent is to have a standard for the physical layout and software for the push buttons which will be presented to WAAC for their input.
- Once the design is installed out into the field, a few members of WAAC will be invited to visit an intersection, and to walk through the installation.
- Refers to the pedestrian crossovers that have been installed with the push button and the flashing lights. That design and installation standard was set by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario. Adds that as one municipality, it is difficult to

notify the Ministry that there are issues with the design and suggests large groups, i.e. CNIB come to the table with the City of Windsor to state the issues and to provide recommendations.

P. Best suggests a Canadian standard be developed as every municipality has variations. He adds if the City of Windsor can develop a standard it will push forward towards getting a provincial or national standard.

S. Bagga asks if the cities of London and Hamilton are able to share their APS best practices and evidence of their observations. He asks if he is able to view the APS design standards from the Ministry of Transportation.

S. Boakes advises that any data from the City of London and Hamilton or other municipalities will be shared with WAAC. The document from the Ministry of Transportation is called "The Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 15" and a link to view the document will be provided to WAAC.

G. Jones noted that it can be a bit difficult to provide fulsome comments unless everyone fully understands how the Accessible Pedestrian Signals work. Most people understand that the signals emit sound to assist those who are blind or low vision to safely cross the street, but there is more to it that just that. G. Jones asks the members if they would like an overview and they agreed that it would be most helpful.

G Jones explains that for a sighted individual crossing, the street is as simple as finding a crosswalk, wait for the right moment, and get to the opposite sidewalk by walking straight across. For a blind or low vision person it is more complicated and they need to trust their other senses such as hearing and touch. Accessible Pedestrian Signals can be of great assistance if they are set up in order to meet the needs of the users. Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) advise pedestrians who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind when they have the right-of-way to cross at a signalized intersection and in which direction they may cross the intersection.

G Jones provided a high level overview of what is needed for those who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind to cross the road safely?

**1. Locate the beginning of the crossing**

Sighted individuals rely on visual cues to find the crossing and get to it so they can use it. This can be much more challenging for blind and visually impaired pedestrians to find where the crossing begins especially at intersections they're not familiar with. An APS is supposed to assist with this as it has a locator tone that constantly emits sound. This is essentially audio signage that helps these pedestrians find the beginning of the crossing. The locator tone is generally set up to be a certain amount higher than the ambient sound. Therefore, their volume depends on the intersections and their traffic.

**2. Press the pushbutton**

People with vision disabilities have now found the beginning of the crossing. But to know when they have the right-of-way, they need to press the accessible pedestrian signals pushbutton on the pole. If the locator tone is present and set up properly finding the pushbutton should not be a problem. If there is no audible tone then the person will have to feel around till they find it on the pole.

If the button is pressed quickly then the audible features will not be triggered. The button must be pressed for about 4 seconds to engage the audible features.

A raised (tactile) arrow is required on the pushbutton and provides information to pedestrians who are blind or low vision about which crosswalk is controlled by the pushbutton. It points in the direction of travel on the crosswalk and it is important for this to be aligned properly to assist blind and visually impaired pedestrians.

The arrow is also the part of the APS that may vibrate during the WALK interval (available feature on more recent versions of the units). This is particularly helpful for deafblind pedestrians to make them aware it is time to cross the intersection.

**3. Rely on the accessible pedestrian signals**

Once the accessible pedestrian signals are activated they provide audio information when the WALK signal is on (destination beacon tone). To clarify, the locator tone helps the individual find the push button and the destination beacon tone helps the person find their way safely across the street. For them to properly work, they need to provide:

- High-quality sound,
- Clear information and street name of the intersection is very helpful
- Appropriate volume above the ambient sound

When installers set up accessible pedestrian signals, they need to take into account the ambient sound when traffic is busy to make sure it perfectly matches real conditions. Consequently, their volume depends on the intersections and their traffic.The point is for blind and visually impaired people to properly hear the audio information provided without covering ambient sound. The ambient sound actually helps them understand how the intersection is (i.e: busy with traffic, fellow pedestrians or cyclists etc.).

**4. Get to the other side of the crossing**

The WALK sign is on-- The accessible pedestrian signal should emit sound to let blind and visually impaired pedestrians know they can cross the street. At this point, the goal is to walk straight without going off course. Two elements explain this:

- The need to avoid bumping into other pedestrians,
- The need to easily get across the street and arrive safely at the other side of the crossing.

One way to help them cross the street more easily is to set up a guiding sound corridor directly integrated in the accessible pedestrian signals. With such a system, both APS from both sides of the crossing simultaneously broadcast audio information while blind and visually impaired pedestrians are crossing the street. The guiding sound

corridor wraps up them. They just have to follow the sound to reach the other side. It truly helps them walk straight.

S. Boghean states that P. Best has been a driving force in the APS initiative, and other CNIB clients have added their valuable input, as they are the ones that are blind and visually impaired crossing these streets every day. They are doing a run through of the intersections provided by the City of Windsor and are listing the concerns. Attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes is a copy of the high level Lauzon and Wyandotte intersection comments and issues.

Issues arise when a person is looking for a post at an intersection, but due to volumes of traffic levels people are not always sure that they are lined up right. If it says “wait to cross” one could have easily found a box but might be going in the wrong direction if one cannot decipher the traffic volume. When looking at the standards she suggests looking at the signals that actually talk and say “wait to cross” or “safe to cross Wyandotte”. In terms of the levels of volume, there is a need to investigate what is available with those systems and suggests tweaking the volume during the day from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

N. Petro thanks S. Boghean for making this a priority to address the sound and having it at the proper decibel levels for those who are visually impaired and for the neighbours nearly who may be impacted by the noise.

Councillor Sleiman asks if every intersection can be equipped with the APS system for the visually and hearing impaired individuals. He also asks what the cost would be.

S. Boghean states that the new APS’s being installed along Banwell near the WFCU Centre, if one keeps their finger on the button, it begins to vibrate which will assist hearing impaired individuals to know that it is safe to cross. In response to Councillor Sleiman’s comment regarding the location of the APS’s, she suggests prioritizing the busy intersection locations and to repair what the city currently has.

S. Boakes responds that some of the locations around the city would be simple to install, i.e. order the push buttons, and install them on the poles at a cost of $30,000 per location. There are a significant number of intersections (of the 293) that we would be doing a disservice to a number of the residents who need them by just installing them where the poles are currently located. If the push buttons are placed on the existing poles, the goal is that if one pushes the button, they should be able to walk straight into the street but they cannot due to the existing pole locations. They would need to extend the curb cuts, reinstall tactile plates, install new poles and it would be dangerous to install them on the existing infrastructure. In this case, the cost could be anywhere from a $50,000 to $200,000 upgrade at a specific location. The goal is to have one hundred percent of their signals to be in that accessible state.

## 5.2 Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS)

G. Jones reports that the FADS documentation has been received from the City of London that allows the City of Windsor to utilize that standard or portions of the standard. A corporate report has been drafted and will be forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer and once signed will be sent to the City of London which will provide a sign-off to use that standard. Following that, the document will be provided to WAAC along with key players from Engineering and Facilities as there will be some tweaks to the FADS document. The amount of changes and input from the various groups will affect the timeline for completion. Once completed, the document will be forwarded to City Council for review and approval.

## 5.3 Alexander Park Update

G. Jones reports that she has been advised by Parks that the cement has gone in for the accessible picnic table which has been ordered. She adds that the commemorative bench for Sandra Friesen has been ordered, and the plaque is in the process of being made.

## 5.4 WAAC 2022 Operating Budget

G. Jones puts forward the following suggestion for the WAAC 2022 operating budget:

- The City of Windsor for many years has offered paid employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, i.e. special projects focused on individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- In 2018, an annual budget of approximately $150,000 a year focused on hiring persons with disabilities, however, many of those positions were focused on unionized positions especially outdoor focused positions.
- Proposes the creation of opportunities for persons with disabilities in office settings and suggests that WAAC sponsor a paid temporary part-time position for a person with an intellectual disability for 2023.
- Suggests that the person could work out of non-unon areas such as Human Resources or Provincial Offences (non-union), and work with the service provider and the Corporation.

The Chair suggests that the WAAC 2022 operating budget be discussed at the next meeting of WAAC.

### 5.5 Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination Consultation

G. Jones states that the selection committee met for the Anti-Racism/Anti-Discrimination Request for Proposals. This committee reviewed a number of proposals from a number of proponents and a recommendation will be provided in the near future. She adds that persons with disabilities are being considered fully in this process and a community consultation for anti-racism/anti-discrimination will be undertaken along with the Corporation.

The Co-Chair advises that she was delighted to have been on the selection committee. It was a fair and fulsome process to date led by specialists in-house and City administration. There were many members of the community present and is pleased that accessibility was at the table as well.

## 6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at the call of the Chair.

## 7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 11:45 o'clock a.m.

CHAIR

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR

# Appendix 1: Accessible Pedestrian Signals

**Here are the current locations of the 27 Accessible Pedestrian signals in Windsor:**

1. University & Sunset
2. University & California
3. Wyandotte & Strabane
4. California & Wyandotte
5. Wyandotte & Raymo
6. Riverside & Strabane
7. Lauzon & Wyandotte
8. Pillette & Wyandotte
9. Cabana & Holburn
10. Ouellette & Wyandotte
11. Jefferson & Wyandotte
12. Lauzon & Riverside
13. Ouellette & Elliot
14. Huron Church & Dorchester
15. Huron Church & Malden
16. Huron Church & Totten
17. Huron Church & Girardot
18. Dougall & Ouellette PL.
19. Dominion & Northwood
20. Devonshire & Riverside
21. Banwell & Palmetto
22. Giles & Ouellette
23. McHugh & Spitfires Way
24. Howard & Tecumseh
25. Darfield & McHue
26. Cabana & Mt Royal
27. Cabana & Dougall

**Review of some urgent issues that the Subcommittee found when they attended the**

**Lauzon Road and Wyandotte Street Intersection**

**Definitions**

**Audible Voice** – tells the traveler when it is safe to cross a specific street

**Locator Tones and Destination Beacons** are essentially the same tone however, they serve two very different purposes

**The Locator Tone** helps the traveler find the APS post in order to activate the Audible Voice

The same **Destination Beacon** tone should be loud enough so the traveler can hear it and target his path in order to cross the street in a straight line

**Concerns noted at all 4 Corners-Lauzon Road and Wyandotte Street Intersection**

a) the traffic volume is incredibly high during the daytime hours
b) the sound of the beacons and the audible voice could not be distinguished above the volume of the traffic surges
c) the APS arrow buttons require a substantially increased amount of hand or thumb pressure to engage the voice

**Concerns noted at North and South East Corners –**

a) again, the locator tones are so low in volume the traveller cannot find the post
b) the traveler must line up precisely using the cues at the corner in order to make a straight-line crossing – ex. Lining one's back up against the post and walking forward to the actual corner, - but the locator tone and the voice control box volume is so low it cannot be heard once the traveler steps away from the APS post

**Concerns noted at North and South West Corners –**

a) the locator tone or destination beacon's volume is almost indistinguishable unless one is immediately beside the post, and only inches from the APS button
b) once again, the traveler cannot line up properly at the actual corner and hear the voice to indicate it is "safe to cross Wyandotte Street" all at the same time –

**Further Concerns –** a traveler should be at the corner and ready to step out to make a straight, safe crossing as soon as they hear the audible voice

- but when they have to stand back from the corner in order to stay close to the post so they can hear the tone, they lose precious line up time and most often veer, resulting in an unsafe crossing

- this also results in their not getting across the street before the light turns yellow and red again

**Some things to be considered at the various APS locations as we move forward:**

- Location of the APS; Is it close to the crosswalk it controls?
- Is the tactile arrow in line with crosswalk- This helps the person line up to cross the street

- Proper functioning of the audible WALK indication
- Proper functioning of the vibrotactile WALK indication (if present on unit)
- WALK indication— sufficient volume and appropriate chosen sounds
- Sufficient  locator tone volume and destination beacon tone volume
- Sensitivity level of the automatic volume adjustment- Is this being used and is it working properly?
- Is the duration of the signal long enough for an individual to cross the street safely?