

COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

From: Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Date: January 20, 2025

Subject: 2024 – 4th Quarter Activity Report

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receives this report for information.

BACKGROUND:

The Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee (AIAC) is a Select Committee of Council established to provide advice and recommendations to Council on matters relating to citizens with disabilities, seniors and other citizens with access issues that may impede participation in everyday aspects of community living.

The AIAC mandate is as follows:

- a) To inform all citizens of the Committee's purpose and to identify existing social and physical barriers.
- b) To provide advice and information regarding future planning of municipal services, programs, and facilities.
- c) To work with the Council to increase public awareness of the issues of accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities, seniors, and all citizens.

4th Quarterly Activity Report

Committee members continue to be present in the community being cognizant of barriers that can or may impede access or inclusion navigating community facilities and spaces. As we learn more about access and inclusion, we are more and more conscientious of what exists and what changes could still evolve to increase the quality of life for some community members.

We continue to offer our "walk and roll" site visits however the uptake has been slow. When committee members visit business' and/or attend events they are cognizant of their surroundings and have spoken to managers/owners/operators to tell them about this service.

Creating an awareness within a facility generates questions but once again we hear “wish we could do more, but times are tough”.

This past quarter has not been as busy as previous quarters but that seems to be the way our community functions – things are quieter during the winter months. However, we are always looking for ways that we can support active and inclusive participation in everyday aspects of community living.

- Committee members seem to be more involved in the day-to-day operations of the District and this was visible by the number of committee members attending public events hosted by the district i.e. All Candidates Forum, District Finance meeting.
- The Community Christmas Concert presented by Morfee School. The Recreation Centre is the ideal venue to host events such as this and we encourage the community to take advantage of this well-designed spacious facility. Additionally, we are pleased to say it is one of the most accessible and inclusive spaces in the community. This facility has been receptive to our Walk and Roll site visits, and we will continue to provide our services whenever there are changes/renovations that affect community users i.e. change room adaptations, washroom upgrades etc.
 - Recommended changes for community events such as the public meeting is there needs to be an improved sound system and the installation of hearing (loop) system.
 - Also, the use of staging would make the venue more inclusive. (accessible and inclusive sight and sound).
 - A reminder is that it is important to have wide, clear aisles for ease of access.
 - The Morfee School concert was great! However, the space was not conducive to accessibility based on the level of attendance.

There are several groups, committees, organizations in the community that have common target audiences, concerns, and barriers. Regardless of which group members of our committee support they can share information related to activities, access, and inclusion. We can share information about available services and resources; opportunities to work together to address common concerns i.e. transportation, medical support, home support, snow removal, wellness checks, seniors’ housing or lack thereof and the list goes on. Working together for common goals makes our community inclusive.

We acknowledge the District’s efforts to recruit committee members to replace those whose terms have expired, and we too will assist with the search for potential candidates. We also acknowledge and have welcomed the alternate Council Liaison – Peter Kyлло. Peter attended and participated in our December 18th committee meeting.

The committee thanks the District staff for updates to the website by implementing the “Tip of Week” program, updating resources and asking for our support in making the website more

accessible and inclusive. We are also learning about accessible resources such as a website and we acknowledge the support being offered by Amy Coates from our committee to support the District. We support the District's application to SparcBC for website funding. An accessible and inclusive website speaks to Mackenzie being a forward thinking, supportive community that welcomes everyone to live, work and play.

Perhaps moving forward and when a funding opportunity is available the district would consider the addition of Mobi mats for 1st and 2nd beach.

Our last report acknowledged the placement of port-a-potties within the parks. Over the past few months, we have taken things one step further by inspecting the existing outdoor washroom facilities owned by the district. We have completed a preliminary "draft report" that we hope to release in the spring. We would like to do one more final check comparing and confirming our findings in comparison to the accessibility code.

As per conversations that Councillors had at UBCM with BC Hydro we are hoping that we will be invited to meet with BC Hydro staff when they plan updates to the washroom facilities at Mackenzie Landing (22 Mile).

Last quarter we mentioned working on the recommendations relating to the committee as identified in the Age-Friendly Access and Inclusion Action Plan and this is an ongoing project. We also stated that we would be hosting our own information sessions as they relate to neurodivergent disabilities and technology these are still in the planning stages.

4th Quarter Committee Activities:

2024	Activity: 4th Quarter
October 2	Williston Lake Elders Society —society & bylaw
October 2	Access and Inclusion meeting
October 5	Northern Roots Symposium
October 15	Williston Lake Elders Society (Care Home) meeting
October 17	Williston Lake Elders Society (Care Home) Bylaw meeting
October 18	Quarterly Report due and submitted
October 19	Elections BC (2 committee members were officers who made recommendations related to accessibility adaptations)
October 22	New Horizon Celebration and Wind-up
October 23	Video Conference – Heart Homes re Care Home insight into process
October 28	Rural Health
October 31	Williston Lake Elders Society (Care Home) – Boundary Design Care Home consultant
November 4	All Candidates forum
November 6	Williston Lake Elders Society (Care Home) council presentation prep

November 7	District Finance Meeting
November 12	Northern Health Meeting
November 19	Williston Lake Elders Society (Care Home) Care Home meeting – prep for public meeting
November 22	Realtor – features that make an apartment/condo accessible
November 24	A&I committee meeting (no District)
November 25	Rural Health
November 26	Coalition Meeting
November 26	Williston Lake Elders Society (Care Home) public meeting update
December 3	Northern Health Meeting with doctors
December 5	Community Awareness Meeting
December 5	Regional District Fraser Fort George - Recycle
December 17	Williston Lake Elders Society (Care Home) meet Fort St James Chair of their care home project
December 18	Access & Inclusion Committee meeting – Welcome Councillor Peter Kylo
December 18	Morfee School Community Christmas Concert – committee member part of the production, A&I committee member(s) attendance
Note:	Previously not reported – Committee member Amy working with businesses and landlord regarding façade improvement and access to shops located in the strip mall (Museum, Kelly’s Bakery ...)

Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the committee meetings held on October 02, 2025, and December 18, 2025, have been attached for Council’s consideration.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

Community and Social Development

- Our investment in the municipality's services and infrastructure, our commitment to principles of social equity and well-being, and our belief in the value of resident engagement, creates a healthy community in which everyone feels valued and enjoys a high quality of life.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Elizabeth Blackburn, Committee Chair

Reviewed by: Corporate and Financial Services

Approved by: Chief Administrative Officer