



Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)

MINUTES

A meeting of the Stratford Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 12:00 p.m., Rotary Complex – Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

Committee Members Present: Roger Koert – Chair Presiding, Andy Mark, Judy Hopf, Kathleen Barry, Jamie Pritchard, Diane Sims, Councillor Bonnie Henderson

Staff Present: Nolan Campbell - Engineering Design Technician, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator, Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Regrets: Joan Jones, Jen Weber

1. Call to Order

Roger Koert, Chair presiding, called the AAC meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Reading of the Land Acknowledgement and a Moment of Silent Reflection.

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Policy.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

3. Adoption of the Previous Minutes – February 3, 2026

Motion by Diane Sims

Seconded by Andy Mark

THAT the minutes from the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting dated February 3, 2026 be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Delegation: Sarah Merkel, HPPH - Health Promotion & Wellbeing Team

Sarah Merkel addressed the committee and shared a presentation on site planning and built environment. Topics discussed included:

- Huron Perth Public Health & Accessibility
- Municipal Liaison Program
- Build Environment – Official Plans
- Build Environment – Site/Subdivision Plans, Commenting
- Active Transportation
- Common Amenity Areas
- Site Connectivity & Accessibility
- Parks & Trail Audits with Reporting to Municipalities

Jamie Pritchard inquired if Ms. Merkel could share her park audits with the AAC once they are complete. It would be very useful information for the members reviewing the annual playground proposals when they are evaluating equipment and making their recommendations. Councillor Henderson stated that it will be helpful to have a network to connect with, to hear about what other municipalities are doing.

Sarah Merkel is also on the Planning list for Stratford and receives the plans that are circulated for comments the same as the AAC site plan review sub-committee.

Roger Koert thanked Ms. Merkel for attending the meeting and sharing information on what types of projects she is working on and how the HPPH Health Promotion & Wellbeing Team works towards inclusion and accessibility.

Sarah Merkel is no longer present at the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

5. Infrastructure Services Update

Nolan Campbell discussed a potential snow windrow removal program for the City of Stratford. He will e-mail the details to committee members for their feedback and comments for staff to begin forming further details on the program. Mr. Campbell will also include links to other municipalities who have a similar program.

Roger Koert inquired about an update on projects planned for 2026 once contracts have been awarded. Nolan Campbell stated that staff is currently working on tenders that will be going out in March and April. A fulsome report of projects awarded could be provided at the May meeting.

Mr. Koert also inquired if there was a report that could be provided that breaks down what projects were completed in 2025 from the engineering budget for accessibility. If there are any outstanding curb cuts from that list, a motion could be made at the May meeting to outline what accessibility projects the AAC would like to request staff complete in 2026.

Mr. Koert stated that one curb cut that should be addressed is at the accessible parking spot on Wellington Street (closest to St. Patrick Street). The curb cut is directly in front of the parking space, which does not allow access to it if there is a vehicle parked in the space. Mr. Koert suggested the curb cut could be moved down approximately a meter with an access aisle to it.

Mr. Koert inquired why the city stopped clearing the snow on the Mornington Street sidewalk from McCarthy Road to Graff Avenue. Nolan Campbell will inquire with staff and provide an update to the committee.

6. Update from Site Plan Review Sub-Committee

Nolan Campbell, Engineering Design Technician, reported that the sub-committee completed reviews of the following site plans:

- 67 Barron Street (Emily Murphy Centre)
- 505 Wright Blvd (industrial addition)
- 775 Douro Street (industrial lot)
- 680 Orr Street (residential development)
- 15 Griffith Road (industrial addition)
- 1067 Ontario Street (drive through at financial institution)

Mr. Campbell will contact Sarah Merkel to inquire about the checklist that she used for reviewing and possibly integrate it into what the site plan review sub-committee completes.

Mr. Campbell will organize staff for the online training modules through Julie Sawchuk. The recommendation from the AAC is to fill as many of the (8) spots as possible with city staff and any additional spots available will be offered to members of the site plan review sub-committee.

Through ONAP, Vicky Trotter has also received the City of Guelph's internal site plan review process through their accessibility coordinator to use as a learning tool.

7. Update From City Council

Councillor Henderson stated there were no new updates to report.

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

8.1 Special Event Application Review

Vicky Trotter previously circulated the current special events application to all AAC members to review and provide feedback by February 27, 2026.

Roger Koert suggested that snow should be added as one of the terrains that the mobi-mats can be used for, based on the feedback from Lights On Stratford. The application still has the previous Accessibility, Diversity & Equity Coordinator as the contact, so Ms. Trotter will have that updated.

Councillor Henderson asked if Ms. Trotter would also inquire if the statement regarding Service Dogs can be revised. The current application asks, "are Service Animals permitted at the event venue"? Service Dogs are always permitted and this should be worded differently.

Roger Koert received the following feedback for the mobi-mats used on Tom Patterson Island for Lights On Stratford:

- Better edge fastening to prevent mounds of snow from forming under the mats (suggests a more robust fastening system and also fastening more frequently);
- The exit at the bridge mouth posed some problems – the concrete pad transitioning onto uneven flagstone made it difficult to create a smooth transition onto the mobi-mats;

Andy Mark suggested that there should be additional curb cuts near Tom Patterson Island on the north side. There seems to be enough on the other side, just not access on the island side. Mr. Mark will visit the area to survey curb cuts and accessible parking spots and suggest a location to request additional accessible parking spots.

8.2 AAC Name Tags

Vicky Trotter shared the two final design options for the AAC members to choose from. Members preferred the option that has the logos on it. Ms. Trotter will go ahead and order the nametags with the logos and members names on them.

8.3 Update on Disability Pride Flag

Vicky Trotter reported that the flag has been ordered and the request to fly the disability pride flag in July is listed on the May 26, 2026 Regular Council agenda for the consideration of Council. Ms. Trotter will bring the flag to the next AAC meeting for members to see it.

8.4 Update on Accessible Boat Launch

Vicky Trotter has researched the history of the previous discussions relating to the accessible boat launch. The request went to Parks Board in October 2024 after a request from the Light Up the Night Co-Chairs. The Parks Board approved the project in theory and requested that Light Up the Night representatives attend AAC to and speak to them about their request. However, they did not attend an AAC meeting. At the time, the estimated cost of an accessible boat launch was \$69,000.00, for just the dock alone. Prep work, footings, etc. would be an additional cost. For comparison, St. Marys received a \$250,000.00 grant plus funding from a private doner for their launch. If the AAC would like to consider an accessible boat launch, they would need to request it to be included in a future budget.

Motion by Councillor Henderson

Seconded by Jamie Pritchard

THAT the Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends that Council direct staff to review the feasibility of an accessible boat launch at the east side of the festival bridge;

AND THAT Council review the possibility of community sponsors for the project. Carried

9. New Business

9.1 National AccessAbility Week

Roger Koert reported that National AccessAbility Week this year will be from May 31-June 6, 2026.

Judy Hopf suggested that this year the AAC could visit local nursing homes once a month to take part in activities with the residents. Ms. Hopf was hoping to visit once a month for a year. Ms. Hopf will contact administrators and/or directors of recreation to inquire if this might be an option.

Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting
March 3, 2026

Ms. Hopf also suggested running a program at the Public Library for children to help them understand accessibility.

Councillor Henderson suggested that the AAC could visit SDSS again and have booths set up.

Roger Koert will do a radio interview and address Council at the May 26, 2026 meeting.

During AccessAbility week, the opening of nominations for the 2026 accessibility award will be announced. Vicky Trotter suggested that if Stratford is successful with the Rick Hansen grant, it could get announced this week as well.

9. Upcoming Events

- Stratford Home & Leisure Show (Rotary Complex) – April 11 & 12, 2026
- Primary Care & Homecare Symposium (Stratford County Club) – April 15, 2026
- City Council Meeting (AccessAbility Week Update) – May 26, 2026
- National AccessAbility Week – May 31-June 6, 2026
- AccessFest (Toronto) – June 6, 2026

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next AAC meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2026 – Rotary Complex, Mansbridge Room, 353 McCarthy Road W., Stratford ON

11. Adjournment

Motion by Judy Hopf

Seconded by Kathleen Barry

THAT the March 3, 2026 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting adjourn.

Start Time: 12:05 P.M.

End Time: 1:33 P.M.