

PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT
NORTHERN ROCKIES REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
DISTRICT OF HUDSON'S HOPE
CITY OF FORT ST. JOHN
DISTRICT OF CHETWYND
DISTRICT OF TAYLOR
VILLAGE OF POUCE COUPE
DISTRICT OF TUMBLER RIDGE
CITY OF DAWSON CREEK

**NORTHEAST BRITISH COLUMBIA COLLABORATIVE ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. Purpose

The Northeast British Columbia Collaborative Accessibility Committee (Northeast Accessibility, or, the Committee) provides a consistent approach to accessibility for people with disabilities living, working, and exploring Northeast BC. The Committee is comprised of staff representatives from nine member communities as well as people living in the region that have disabilities and/or work with organizations that serve people with disabilities.

The Committee was created to assist partnering organizations to implement requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. By participating in the Committee, member local governments will be in compliance with the Act. A regional approach was selected to foster collaboration and cooperation, sharing and pooling of resources, and avoiding duplication of work.

The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Provide a forum for discussion of issues affecting people with all types of disabilities in the region;
- Inform local governments on accessibility issues and solutions in the region and make recommendations for improving accessibility in communities;
- Identify accessibility barriers in the region and solutions to addressing them;
- Review and provide input on community plans, actions, designs, and so forth with an accessibility lens;
- Organize and/or participate in relevant community events or awareness activities wherever possible.

2. Definitions

“Barrier” means anything that hinders or challenges the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society, including physical, architectural, informational, communication, attitudinal, technological, or policy / practice barriers.

“Disability” includes physical, mental, intellectual, learning, or sensory impairments that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders the full and effective participation of individuals in society.

3. Responsibilities

Members of the Committee are independent representatives and should aim to represent the concerns of multiple disabilities and groups within the region. Members may be expected to:

1. Be familiar with the Accessible British Columbia Act legislation and these Terms of Reference
2. Bring forth issues and recommendations that require action to local government staff and respond to any matter referred to the Committee by local government councils or staff
3. Provide input on and review the Northeast British Columbia Collaborative Accessibility Plan
4. Work cooperatively with local government staff, departments, boards, and commissions whose activities affect people with disabilities, as well as with agencies and organizations that represent people with disabilities
5. Maintain a list of key organizations and contact information of people willing to be resources to the Committee
6. Compile resources related to best practices and standards that can guide local governments to meaningfully and impactfully improve accessibility in the region
7. Share resources and knowledge amongst communities, including producing and reviewing communications, guides, or other information from an accessibility perspective
8. Advise on initiatives or projects that local governments are undertaking (e.g., infrastructure projects, plans and strategies) to ensure that issues and concerns of people with disabilities are considered and addressed

The Committee may also be asked, from time to time, to:

- Support with education and training sessions for local government staff and other organizations that would benefit from the Committee's expertise and experience
- Consider other accessibility matters referred to by local government councils or staff that do not fall within the above listed responsibilities

4. Scope and Reporting Relationships

The Committee plays an advisory role on matters relating to accessibility within the region. The Committee will be supported by a Committee Facilitator that will be responsible for several administrative and reporting tasks. The following scope and reporting relationships have been identified in relation to the Committee:

- Committee Members
 - o Advisory role to member local government
 - o Prepare reports and other materials for local government staff
 - o Create sub-committees or working groups to build capacity, resources, and shared knowledge on topics related to accessibility
 - o Selected by current committee through consensus decision making, with emphasis on having representation from across the region and of diverse persons with disabilities
 - o Support the Committee Facilitator in taking meeting minutes where necessary

- Executive Committee
 - o Comprised of a Vice Chair and two (2) Executive positions
 - o Vice Chair acts as Chair for Committee meetings if the Committee Facilitator is unable to attend
 - o Support the Committee Facilitator in developing meeting agendas and preparing minutes where necessary
 - o Meet, when necessary, to advance Committee business between regular monthly Committee meetings
 - o Advise on and review budget requirements, annual reports, and other reports or documents prepared by the Committee Facilitator
 - o Provide oversight and guidance to Committee Facilitator

- Local Government Staff
 - o Support the Committee with technical assistance where needed
 - o Review and provide input on Committee reports, minutes, and other materials
 - o Relay information and advice/recommendations advanced by the Committee to local government councils
 - o Advise local government councils on Membership matters, including Membership recruitment, as well as on the appointment of the Committee Facilitator
 - o Provide support to the Committee Facilitator where needed

- Committee Facilitator
 - o Organize Committee meetings, including develop meeting agendas and ensure all Committee Members are provided with materials for review in advance of meetings
 - o Prepare meeting minutes and circulate to local government staff and Committee Members for review
 - o Act as Chair for Committee meetings
 - o Develop an annual report that summarizes Committee initiatives for the term, present planning initiatives, and outline budget requirements for approval by local government councils

5. **Membership**

Membership of the Committee is comprised of staff, community, and/or members of organizations that work with individuals with accessibility challenges. The Committee shall be comprised of between sixteen (16) and twenty (20) members, as well as the Committee Facilitator. All Committee Members are Voting Members. Community member Committee membership shall adhere to the following:

- At least half (50%) of members are individuals with a disability or support persons with disabilities either at a personal or organizational level
- At least one (1) Indigenous member
- Should reside within the region
- Reflect the general diversity of persons with disabilities in British Columbia

Local Government Staff:

- Eight (8) seats will be for staff appointed from each local government. Each member of this Collaborative is required to appoint one staff person to serve as a liaison on the Committee
- There are no set terms for staff members. In the event a staff member leaves their role, an alternative staff member will be appointed by the relevant local government

Community and Organizational Members:

- A minimum of nine (9) and a maximum of twelve (12) seats will be held by persons who reside in Northeast BC and have a disability or work for an organization that serves people who have disabilities
- Community and/or organizational members are appointed on a volunteer basis by their respective local governments for a three-year term, concluding on December 31st of each calendar year
 - o Each local government has one assigned seat that they may appoint a community member to. Appointments will be prioritized based on whether an individual has a disability and resides within the community
- Members whose terms are expiring may request a continuance for a further three-year period, but no member shall serve more than six consecutive years
- The Committee may consider collective recruitment to fill gaps in geographic or diversity of disabilities represented on the Committee. Up to four seats may be filled through consensus-based decision-making should there be a lack of qualified members in a community
- Applications for appointment will be accepted annually and announced through communications from each community, with applicants to be assessed and recommended by their respective local government staff representative. Local governments may maintain a waitlist of qualified candidates
- Any vacancy caused by the resignation or deemed resignation of a member shall be filled for the remaining term of such member by selecting a qualified candidate from a waiting list (if maintained) or through a special recruitment process
 - o If a member is appointed from a waitlist or through the recruitment process to fulfill a remaining term of six months or less, the start of Committee membership shall be considered to begin on January 1 of the following year
- Committee members wishing to serve more than six consecutive years may be granted an extension if the following terms are satisfied:
 - o The Member wishing for an extension expresses their reason for the extension in writing to the Committee Facilitator
 - o The waiting list for Committee membership is exhausted and Committee membership is not at capacity
 - o An extension is affirmed through a simple majority vote of the Committee
- Extensions will be granted for a term of one (1) year. Further extensions can be completed provided they adhere to the terms indicated above
- Any voting member who has (a) missed three or more meetings in a 12-month period, AND (b) is deemed by the Committee Facilitator as being unlikely to fulfill their commitments to the Committee, may be recommended for removal and replacement. The

Committee as a whole will discuss whether the member shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and/or if that member will be unable to fulfil their duties

- If the Committee as a whole decides through a simple majority vote that the member has resigned and/or should be removed and replaced, the affected member shall be informed of this decision in writing
- Committee Members do not speak on behalf of the Community as a whole unless they have expressed written permission, as established through decision making processes
- Committee membership is contingent upon adhering to the Northeast British Columbia Collaborative Accessibility Committee Code of Conduct

6. Leadership and Coordination

The Committee is to be Chaired by a hired Committee Facilitator. The Committee Facilitator is responsible for all activities related to planning and hosting Committee meetings, including coordinating minute taking, preparing agenda packages in accessible formats, and making arrangements for meeting locations (including scheduling virtual meetings). The Committee Facilitator is also responsible for preparing annual Committee Reports that outline Committee work-to-date, accomplishments, future plans, and budget requests.

As Chair, the Committee Facilitator will call meetings to order and preside over meetings of the Committee. The Committee Facilitator is supported by an Executive, comprised of a Vice Chair and two (2) Executive Committee members. The Executive will assist the Committee Facilitator to take meeting minutes, review past meeting minutes, providing input on agenda items, prepare for meetings, and other such duties as required or determined by the Committee. The Vice Chair shall fill in for the Committee Facilitator if they are absent for a meeting.

Executive Committee members shall be nominated and elected by the Committee as a whole and shall serve in their position for a term of two (2) years. Interested Committee members may self-nominate or be nominated by a Committee member during the nomination period. The nomination period shall remain open for a minimum of two weeks each January, in alternating years, following the appointment of new Committee members. Nominations are to be submitted to the Committee Facilitator in writing, electronically, and include a short description detailing why the member is interested in or should be considered for either the Vice Chair or one of the two (2) Executive positions. Committee members that are not self-nominated will be contacted by the Committee Facilitator to ensure consent.

Once the nomination period has closed, the Committee Facilitator will contact candidates to provide biographic information and relevant experience and qualifications that support their nomination. Requested information is to be supplied by nominees to the Committee Facilitator within one week of the nomination period closing. The Committee Facilitator will then create an electronic form that Committee members can use to anonymously vote on nominees. Voting shall be open for a one week period. Voting results will be announced by the Committee Facilitator at the next regular Committee meeting.

Local government staff will, where appropriate, provide the Committee Facilitator, Executive Committee, and the Committee as a whole with planning and technical expertise support where

necessary, as well as will serve as liaisons between the Committee and elected officials and other local government departments.

7. Decision Making

The Committee shall utilize a Consensus-Based Decision-Making Model. This type of decision-making model is generally structured as follows:

- An issue emerges, whether identified by a Committee member or as recommended by a local government staff or Council
- Those in attendance of Committee meetings discuss the issue, with support provided by the Committee Facilitator to ensure an open and focused discussion occurs
- If an answer or recommendation to the issue is presented, the Committee Facilitator will canvas each Committee member to see if they are satisfied with the answer or recommendation. If all Committee members are satisfied, then consensus has been reached and the next issue may be discussed
- If consensus has not emerged, another round of discussion will be initiated by the Committee Facilitator. If consensus has still not been achieved after this round, another round of discussion may be initiated or the Committee may decide to table the discussion for another meeting or that additional research or information is needed

At least half of Committee members must be in attendance for quorum to be satisfied.

8. Meetings

Committee meeting dates and times will be scheduled flexibly throughout the year. There shall be a minimum of four (4) and a maximum of twelve (12) meetings held each year. Additional meetings for sub-committees, working groups, or under exceptional circumstances may be arranged by the Committee Facilitator under direction of the Committee as a whole. Regular Committee meetings shall be open to the general public to provide input or attend.

9. Budget, Expenses, and Remuneration

The Committee Facilitator will prepare an Annual Report and Work Plan to be submitted to member local governments by September 1st of each calendar year. This Annual Report and Work Plan should:

- Highlight Committee accomplishments and progress made to advance accessibility in the region
- Outline the expenditures incurred over the year
- Present a high-level work plan that identifies focus areas and actions for the Committee over the next year
- Identify any initiatives or items that may require budget support from local governments

The Committee shall file an annual budget appropriation request based in part on the Annual Report and Work Plan for approval by all local government councils. Budget allocations are to cover operational costs and special projects, in addition to operational funding provided for Committee facilitation and member expenses required for full participation.

Each Committee Member will be provided with the resources necessary to fully participate in Committee activities, which may include reasonable reimbursement for transportation, childcare, interpreters for the hearing impaired, and technical equipment and administrative aids required to participate.

- Members requiring particular resources to fully participate are to coordinate with the Committee Facilitator and local government staff member from the community in which they reside

Committee Members are not remunerated for their participation.