

Minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Group Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 26 May 2020

Time: 5:35pm – 7:51pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

PRESENT

Chairperson

Tristram Ingham

Rachel Noble

Members

Amy Evanson

Erikka Helliwell

Stuart Mills

Solmaz Nazari

Alan Royal

Nick Ruane

Councillor

Rebecca Matthews

In Attendance

Moana Mackey – Chief City Planner

Bradley Singh – Transport Assets Manager

Amy Jackman – Advisor Planning and Reporting

Baz Kaufman – Manager Strategy and Research

Hedi Mueller – Democracy Advisor

Public

Laura Stuart

Claudia Boyles

Felicity Wong

1. MEETING PROCEDURES

5:35pm

1.1 Welcome

Welcome with introductions around the table.

1.2 Apologies

Rosie MacLeod's absence was noted.

1.3 Conflicts of Interest

Rachel Noble, Tristram Ingham, Erikka Helliwell and Amy Evanson declared potential conflicts of interest if the COVID-19 pandemic response was discussed.

1.4 Confirmation of Minutes – Minutes of 25 Feb 2020

That the minutes of 25 February 2020 be adopted as a true and accurate record.

Moved by Rachel Noble, seconded by Solmaz Nazari

Carried

2. PRESENTATIONS

2.1 Suburban Pedestrian Ramp Audit

5:44pm

Facilitated by Bradley Singh

Bradley gave presentation on the results of the Pedestrian Ramp Audit, which was a project run in May 2019. The results of the audit were not good, due to topography and the WCC standard not being retrospectively applied. The consultant produced a priority index which identified ramps to be addressed first; however the priority index did not take into accessibility into account, which Bradley would like to do. Bradley would like advice from the AAG around which ramps would provide most benefit to the disabled community if they were improved and should be prioritised. This will inform part of his request for funding.

Members discussed with the presenter:

- **Definition of 'inaccessible' for a ramp that is** a non-compliant
- Why there is a difference between National Standards and Wellington Standards? Bradley advised this is due to available space, in Wellington the space is often not available. Bradley to circulate full report.
- That there seems to be a particular emphasis on wheelchair users and mobility scooters, when people experience footpaths **differently when they aren't working** depending on their disability. Brad agreed and advised **that's the type of feedback** he was here to solicit.
- That it is important to work with the blind and those who use different equipment – suggestion of using Wheelmap, a mapping technology to identify where problem areas are.
- That it is important to prioritise not just access to basic services, but the city as a whole so that disabled people **aren't** excluded from culture and arts.
- Suggestion for traffic engineers to put on blindfolds or borrow wheelchairs to understand more about how people cope. Willis St and Dixon St are problematic areas and ones that people avoid even with electric wheelchairs. Bradley to touch base outside of meeting.
- That AAG could run a survey and use the opportunity to connect with the community. Bradley advised that anything to give focus would be a tremendous help.
- That Annual Plan discussions need to include accessible walking infrastructure.
- **To think about people's journeys** – if there is a block in any one point the whole journey becomes inaccessible. Has WCC made a commitment to make transport network compliant and if so in what timeframe? A previous comment to the AAG was that to get the CBD up to code NZS4121 with current maintenance budget it would take 110 years. Bradley advised

he was not certain of a commitment, but he was here today to find out what first step should be.

- Whether maintenance mandates that it is put it back to previous state, eg not necessarily upgraded? Bradley advised that to upgrade or make an area compliant it would require double the spend, so would need to show that **it's an area that** needs it – a low use area with little traffic **wouldn't be** justified in terms of the request for funding.

Actions:

- AAG to provide feedback on which areas would benefit the community most.
- Stuart to touch base with Bradley regarding the transport engineers experience.

The presenter agreed to:

- Circulate full report.

2.2 Annual Plan Consultation

6:30pm

Facilitated by Amy Jackman and Baz Kaufman

Baz discussed the 2020/21 draft Annual Plan and how the lockdown has impacted this. There has been lots of uncertainty with COVID-19, as a Council we are losing revenue through the lockdown to the tune of \$20 million loss this financial year, and potentially \$38 million in 2021. We are facing significant financial challenges and we were already facing those prior to the pandemic anyway.

Regarding the Pandemic Response and Recovery Plan – Councillors signed off on this two weeks ago; a range of initiative that provide immediate support such as rates/rent relief, fee rebates for hospitality industry, and additional funding in community grants. Annual Plan (AP) – trying to balance services and investments and rate increase when **households/businesses can't accommodate**

increases in expenses. The AP draft is currently out for consultation.

Three key things:

- Loss of revenue – borrowing instead of raising rates, does mean future rates higher to cover debt
- Not taking austerity approach – still investing in future. Good for job creation and economic catalyst
- Tipu Toa/Build Back Better – community sees opportunity to improve initiatives.
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Rates – options offered are either 5.1% increase or 2.3% increase. 2.3% increase would put too much debt into next year and impact on future projects. The consultation is open for one month; WCC wants feedback so please encourage people to submit.

Members discussed with the presenter:

- If there are any accessibility specific actions within the Annual Plan, for example footpaths or schools? Baz advised that more broadly, the next ten years there will be a lot of capital expenditure and it will be a rich period to make changes in accessibility space.
- Whether the WCC accessibility role discussed at previous meetings is still happening? Moana advised this had been delayed with the COVID-19 response, and she would follow up with Jenny Rains.
- Besides rates relief and fee rebates, other options to help low income or disabled community? Baz advised that the Pandemic Response and Recovery Plan is broader than fees rebates and rates relief, very comprehensive in providing support in COVID-19 lockdown. A broader recovery package is also being worked on, but still in draft phase so the Annual Plan is an opportunity to provide feedback.
- That last time there was an earlier session about the Annual Plan, and it feels a bit late for the AAG to be involved now?

Baz advised that the draft Annual Plan was written and re-written due to frequently changing situation, and would have liked to get to AAG sooner. There is the opportunity to be involved quite early with the Long Term Plan, as the first session was held with Councillors today. Amy advised that she is hoping to do more engagement with specific accessibility groups, to talk about what we can do for the engagement process, as the pandemic situation is impacting on ability to engage with those groups.

- Engaging early with the Long Term Plan and putting it on the agenda for June.
- That the projects outlined in Annual Plan **haven't yet been** completed, so still have time to provide feedback and to think about them with accessibility in mind. Baz agreed that significant capital projects should appear before AAG before they get started.
- That accessibility needs to reflect into the four Wellbeings (economic, social, cultural and environmental).
- That social resilience is as important as infrastructural, how is this built into the Annual Plan? Baz advised that resilience is talked about more broadly in the Resilience Strategy three years ago, and it does encompass the wider meaning.
- That from a Councillor level, focus on accessibility is very strong and several Councillors make accessibility a priority
- Feedback from Felicity Wong that the Annual Plan seems to be business as usual, and this could be an opportunity for transformational work in the areas of accessibility, sustainability and plastic use. Also wanting to discuss Cr **Matthew's vote against a 10kmph speed limit on micromobility** in WCC Accessible Streets submission. Cr Matthews advised she had voted against the 10kmph speed limit as officer advice was that 15kmph is safer, due to wobble factor – at lower speeds a crash is more likely.

Actions:

- Moana to follow up with Jenny Rains re Accessibility role at WCC.
- Long Term Plan to be added to agenda for June AAG meeting.

3. General Business

3.1 Councillor Update

7:10pm

Councillor Matthews provided an update on the following:

- Challenges of COVID-19 pandemic – will discuss more at next **meeting with Jenny Rain’s presentation on the pandemic response.**
- E-scooters and Accessible Streets submission, which saw more restrictions on use of e-scooters and more infrastructure to ensure micromobility is not used on footpaths.
- Parking policy consultation still open until 8 June, CCS Disability Action submitted at the hearing today, and mobility parking was a strong focus.
- Co-chairs commented that Councillors and ELT are discussing accessibility more than in previous years which is an improvement, and whether Cr Matthews can see the extent of political buy in? Cr Matthews advised that she has been pleased that she is not the only Councillor that raises accessibility issues and other colleagues such as Cr Paul, Cr **O’Neill and Cr Condie have been very active.** Moana agreed and added that Cr Matthews has been a passionate advocate for the disabled community.

3.2 Member Updates

7:18pm

Members provided an update on items they were working on:

Amy: COVID-19 response and what that means for disability community.

Rachel: COVID-19 response as well. Would like to prioritise Kristine **Ford's** work for next month.

Nick: Workbridge National Office, looking at employment impacts from COVID-19.

Stuart: Working at Ministry of Health for the last nine weeks, seen a lot of the COVID response. Has been enjoying having more pedestrian space on the streets. Is there an update on Advisory Groups review? Hedi advised that review has been delayed due to COVID-19 response, contractors having been seconded to central government. Interviews with Councillors underway since start of the month, looking like it will be completed in August/September.

Tristram: Wrote to WCC including Mayor Foster, Moana and Cr Matthews at start of Alert Level 4 requesting a briefing on the **pandemic response. Haven't received briefing to date so assuming** that is what will be happening at 30 June AAG meeting. Important for AAG to be involved so can be prepared for next national emergency. Tristram to share briefing email with rest of AAG.

Moana discussed that the Pandemic Response highlighted the need for the previously discussed accessibility role – as Moana and Jenny were the two of the most busy people during the immediate response. Clear that emergency response has been geared towards earthquakes so will be good to ensure that all disasters are covered.

Members discussed deferred AAG Chair election – Hedi advised that if group is keen to hold election, would need a resolution for that to happen, and there is potential for another election to be held in

October 2020 as that is what the Terms of Reference specifies. Or could potentially resolve that Chairs have a fifteen month term rather than twelve, or could wait to see outcome of review in August/September and whether election in October is required. Clear that election needs to be run in a safe manner and past election issues not repeated.

That the AAG proceed with the required election process.

Moved by Tristram Ingham, seconded by Stuart Mills **Carried**

Actions:

- Tristram to share briefing email with rest of AAG.
- Hedi to draft election process memo and to include how other advisory groups hold elections, circulate prior to June meeting.

3.3 Annual Report Planning

7:10pm

Hedi advised that the Advisory Groups' Annual Reports are still intended to go through to the Strategy and Policy Committee on 11 June, queried whether AAG is still on track for this or if Annual Report needs to be referred to a later date. Advised that other three advisory groups are on track to have completed reports in time, Tristram agreed that no extension was required.

Actions:

- **Hedi to draw out past year's agenda items and circulate among the group.**
- AAG to draft report, circulate amongst group and finalise by 4 June.

The meeting was declared closed at 7:51.

The next AAG meeting will be held on 30 June 2020 at 5.30pm.