

Accessibility Committee Agenda

Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025
Time: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Location: Electronic Zoom Meeting

	Pages
1. CALL TO ORDER	6:30 PM
2. AGENDA	
2.1 Review of the Agenda	
2.2 Approval of the Agenda	
3. ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION	
3.1 Draft Minutes of Previous Meetings	
3.1.1 Accessibility Committee draft minutes of November 7, 2024	2 - 3
For review and adoption.	
4. BUSINESS	
4.1 Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference	4 - 4
4.2 Other Local Government Accessibility Plans	
4.2.1 District of Saanich	5 - 36
4.2.2 City of Victoria	37 - 74
4.2.3 Bowen Island Municipality	75 - 121
4.2.4 City of Duncan	122 - 139
4.3 Federal Grant for a Workplace Disability Management Assessment - Briefing	140 - 140
5. NEXT MEETING	
5.1 Meeting Schedule for 2025/2026 - Request For Decision	141 - 143
6. ADJOURNMENT	8:30 PM



Accessibility Committee Minutes of a Regular Meeting

Date: November 7, 2024
Location: Electronic Meeting

Members Present: Lisa Gauvreau, Local Trustee, Galiano
Theresa Burley
Marjorie Gang
Stephen MacLean
Lisa Nissinen
Sidra Treall

Member Regrets: Stephen MacLean

Staff Present: David Marlor, Director, Legislative and Information Services
Robert Barlow, Legislative Services Clerk/Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Director Marlor called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. Trustee Gauvreau acknowledged that attendees of the meeting were in locations across the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people.

2. AGENDA

2.1 Review of Agenda

No changes to the agenda were presented for consideration.

2.2 Approval of Agenda

By general consent the agenda was approved as presented.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

3.1 Draft Minutes of Previous Meeting

None as this is the initial meeting of the Committee.

4. BUSINESS

4.1 Welcome and Introductions

Director Marlor provided a welcome to the inaugural meeting of the Accessibility Committee. Members and Staff introduced themselves.

4.2 Review of Accessible British Columbia Act

Director Marlor reviewed the Act.

4.3 Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference

Director Marlor reviewed the Terms of Reference for the Committee as per Trust Council Policy 2.3.1 (Council Committee System). Staff will provide to the Committee the Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference.

4.4 Meeting Schedule

The Committee discussed meeting options, such as whether in-person meetings are required, frequency, and timing.

By general consent the Committee preferred:

- electronic meetings
- in-person meetings only if and when a need arises
- meetings every second or third month initially
- meetings in the evenings during the week

The Committee requested staff to conduct a poll to identify possible meeting dates and times.

5. NEXT MEETING

To be determined.

6. ADJOURNMENT

By general consent the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

David Marlor, Director, Legislative and Information Services

Certified Correct:

Robert Barlow, Legislative Services Clerk/Recorder

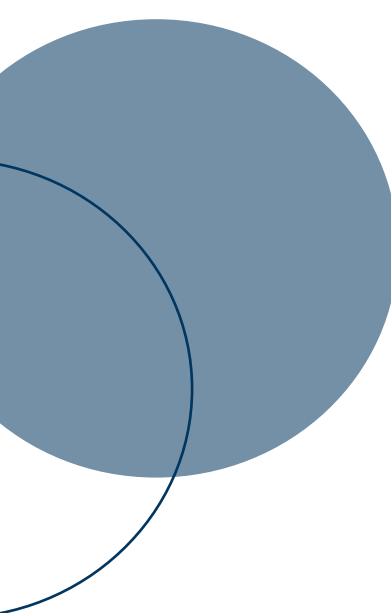
Minutes are not official until adopted at a subsequent meeting.

Attachment 6: Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference

The Accessibility Committee is a mandatory requirement under the *Accessible British Columbia Act* effective September 1, 2023.

The Accessibility Committee provides advice to the Islands Trust Council and management by undertaking the following responsibilities:

1. identify barriers to individuals (public, employees, trustees) in or interacting with the organization in offices, owned or leased locations, Islands Trust Conservancy lands owned or leased, including meeting and public hearing locations
2. identify barriers to individuals (public, employees, trustees) in or interacting with the organization electronically through the Islands Trust website, social media accounts, telephone, electronic meetings or other electronic means
3. advise the organization on how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization
4. develop an Accessibility Plan that address the issues identified, with options and recommendations to remove the barriers, and advise on implementation of the Plan
5. review the Accessibility Plan every three years and seek public feedback on the Accessibility Plan; and, as part of the review, seek feedback generally from the public on potential accessibility barriers and how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization

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District of Saanich Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2026

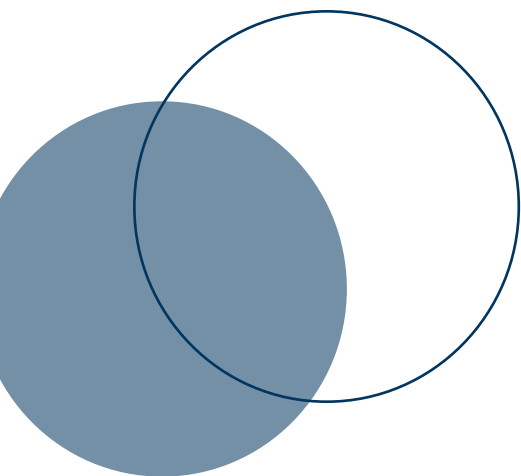
Adopted: December 11, 2023

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the District of Saanich lies within the territories of the lək'wəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples represented by the W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), BÓKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), SṪÁUTW̱ (Tsawout), W̱SIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) Nations.

Diversity Statement

Saanich is committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community and we are guided by the principle that embracing diversity enriches the lives of all people. Council and staff share the responsibility for creating an equitable and inclusive community and for addressing discrimination in all forms.



Acknowledgement

This plan was developed by the District of Saanich, with the support of Melissa Lyon of Accessibility & Inclusion Matter Consulting.

Thank you to the many people who contributed their thoughts and suggestions to the creation of this document.

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Accessibility Statement

Arial fourteen font has been used in this document to improve Accessibility. The accessibility of this document has been verified using the Adobe Pro accessibility checker and the [WebAim colour contrast checker](#). If you require an alternative format, contact AccessibilityFeedback@Saanich.ca.

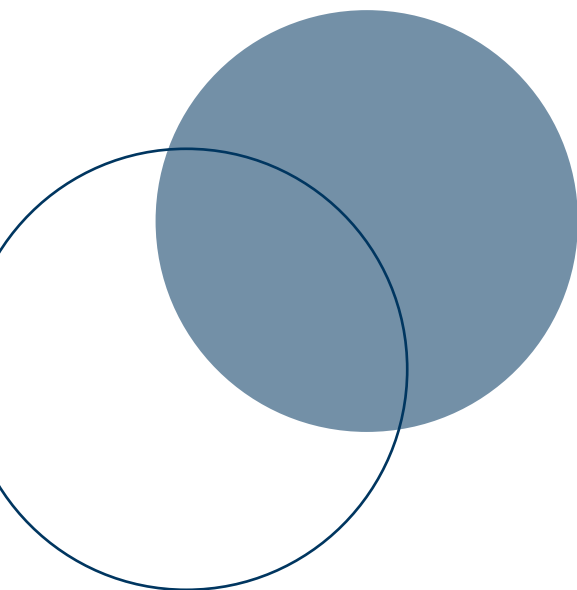


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Introduction

About the District of Saanich

With more than 117,735 residents, Saanich is the largest municipality in the Capital Region. It occupies a central position within the region – immediately north of the City of Victoria and sharing boundaries with Highlands, View Royal, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, and Central Saanich. As the gateway to the metropolitan core, Saanich provides key transportation links to the airport, ferry terminal, Western Communities, Saanich Peninsula, and the rest of Vancouver Island. Saanich's physical setting contains a mix of marine shoreline, freshwater lakes, natural watercourses, and diverse rolling topography with elevations ranging from sea level to 355 m. Approximately half the municipality is urban and half rural/agricultural – a dual role that has influenced its character and development.

Our Commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion

The District of Saanich and Saanich Police Department strive to create an inclusive and welcoming culture, where people of all ages and abilities feel included and can equally access the facilities, services, and programs. In our daily work, we endeavour to apply an accessibility lens to all aspects of what we do.

Saanich is committed to identifying and removing barriers that persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups face. Our goal is to meet or exceed the Accessible B.C. Act requirements, so that everyone in our community can continue to grow and thrive.

Messages

The Mayor of Saanich & Chief Administrative Officer

On behalf of Saanich Council and the entire District of Saanich, we are pleased to introduce our new Accessibility Plan, a roadmap that reflects our support for accessibility, diversity equity and inclusion.

We firmly believe that the true strength of a community lies in its ability to embrace and celebrate all residents. Saanich's greatest asset is our community and their experiences, backgrounds, abilities, and perspectives.

Our goal is to go beyond just meeting compliance standards. This Plan reflects our collective commitment to creating an accessible, inclusive and welcoming environment where every individual can fully participate. We encourage each of you to join us on this journey as we continue to build a strong community where everyone belongs.



Mayor Dean Murdock



CAO Brent Reems

ADEI Committee Chair

In support of furthering the District of Saanich's accessibility and inclusion initiatives, the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (ADEI) Committee endorses this Accessibility Plan. This document will be revised over time as we continue to implement our action items and as we receive additional feedback.



*ADEI Committee Chair,
Councillor Mena Westhaver*

We would like to thank the Saanich leadership team and the members of the ADEI staff committee. They have shown great commitment and dedication to this plan and are working hard to create a more accessible and inclusive Saanich community.

Saanich Police Board

The Saanich Police Board provides independent oversight and governance of the Saanich Police Department. The Board looks forward to working with the Saanich Police Department and the District of Saanich to reduce barriers and enhance accessibility through awareness and training, building environmental improvements, and increasing access to services. The Board thanks staff and committee members for input provided to date and looks forward to community input as the Saanich Police Department expands its actions to increase accessibility.



*Police Board Chair,
Mayor Dean Murdock*

Definitions

The following definitions may be useful to keep in mind as you are reading this plan:

Accessibility	Accessibility involves developing laws, standards, and practices that remove barriers and support persons with disabilities to live with dignity and to meaningfully participate in their own communities. ¹
Accommodation	The employer's responsibility under the B.C. Human Rights Code to adapt the workplace to meet the needs of the individual employee. ²
Barrier	Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and can be affected by intersecting forms of discrimination. ³
Disability	An inability to participate fully and equally in society because of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier. ³
Impairment	An impairment can be a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment - whether permanent, temporary, or episodic. ³
Inclusion	An attitude and approach that embraces diversity and differences and promotes equal opportunities for all. Inclusion is not just about persons with disabilities. When our communities include and embrace everyone, we are ALL better able to reach our full potential. ⁴

The District of Saanich recognizes this is an emerging field with diverging perspectives. As such we have aligned our language with [the Accessible BC Act](#), [the Premier Letter](#), the United Nations [Inclusive Language Guidelines](#) and with [information released by the Accessibility Directorate](#).

Understanding Disabilities

Types of Disabilities

Pain-related	According to the Canadian Survey on Disability this is the most common type of disability for Canadians. This disability is most common among seniors, and more likely to occur in women (16.6% of women with a disability stated it was pain related) compared to men (12.4% of men with a disability stated it was pain related).⁵ This type of disability commonly occurs with other disabilities and may refer to long-term or complex pain.
Flexibility, Mobility and Dexterity	This type of physical impairment is significantly more common for those aged 65 years and over.⁵ It can present in many ways, impacting an individual's physical flexibility, mobility, or dexterity.
Mental health-related	A mental health-related disability impacts the brain and the way a person thinks, feels, and acts. Three out of five youth with disabilities have a mental health related disability.⁵
Seeing	A disability resulting in a sensory impairment which can range from partial to complete vision loss.

Hearing	A disability resulting in a sensory impairment which can range from partial to complete hearing loss.
Learning and Memory	Learning or memory disabilities include impairments related to reading, writing or problem solving. They can also impact long and short-term memory, ability to reason or organize, and attention span.
Developmental	Developmental disabilities impair an individual's physical or mental development.
Other	There are many other disabilities which impact an individual's ability to participate fully and equally in society.

Types of Barriers

Persons with disabilities face six general barriers:

1. Attitudinal barriers

When people think and act based on false ideas, leading to discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Example: Making decisions about persons with disabilities without including them. Not believing that a person with a disability can contribute to a project.

2. Informational or communication barriers

When communication methods do not reach persons with disabilities because they can't access them or understand them.

Examples: Using small print or not providing large-print versions of materials. Videos, events, or meetings that don't have closed captions.

3. Technological barriers

When technology can't be accessed by persons with disabilities.

Examples: Websites, documents, or databases that aren't accessible for screen readers. Website images that do not have text to explain them.

4. Physical or architectural barriers

When physical obstacles make access for persons with disabilities difficult.

Examples: A washroom with an accessible stall but no automatic door opener.

5. Organizational or systemic barriers

When an organization's policies or procedures aren't inclusive.

Examples: Requiring a driver's license for a job when another form of transportation could be used. Not providing closed captioning for meetings, events, or videos.

6. Sensory barriers

When sensory information such as lights, sounds, or smells prevent participation in the environment.

Examples: Co-workers wearing scented products in the workplace. Use of fluorescent lighting in the workplace.

Through our consultation with employees and the community, we received feedback related to each type of barrier and noted several opportunities for improvement. This information has, and will continue, to inform our action planning particularly as additional input is received.

Disabilities in Saanich

In 2017, Statistics Canada completed the [Canadian Survey on Disability](#) which found that one in five (22%) Canadians aged 15 years and over had one or more disabilities.⁵

In 2021, the District of Saanich had 102,535 residents over the age of 15⁶, of which, in using the Statistics Canada Survey on Disability data, we estimate ~22,557 (22%) are currently living with one or more disabilities varying in severity.

Severity

8,400	mild disability
4,493	moderate disability
4,674	severe disability
4,990	very severe disability
22,557	Total based on the global severity class.

Note: Numbers have been rounded to align to total.

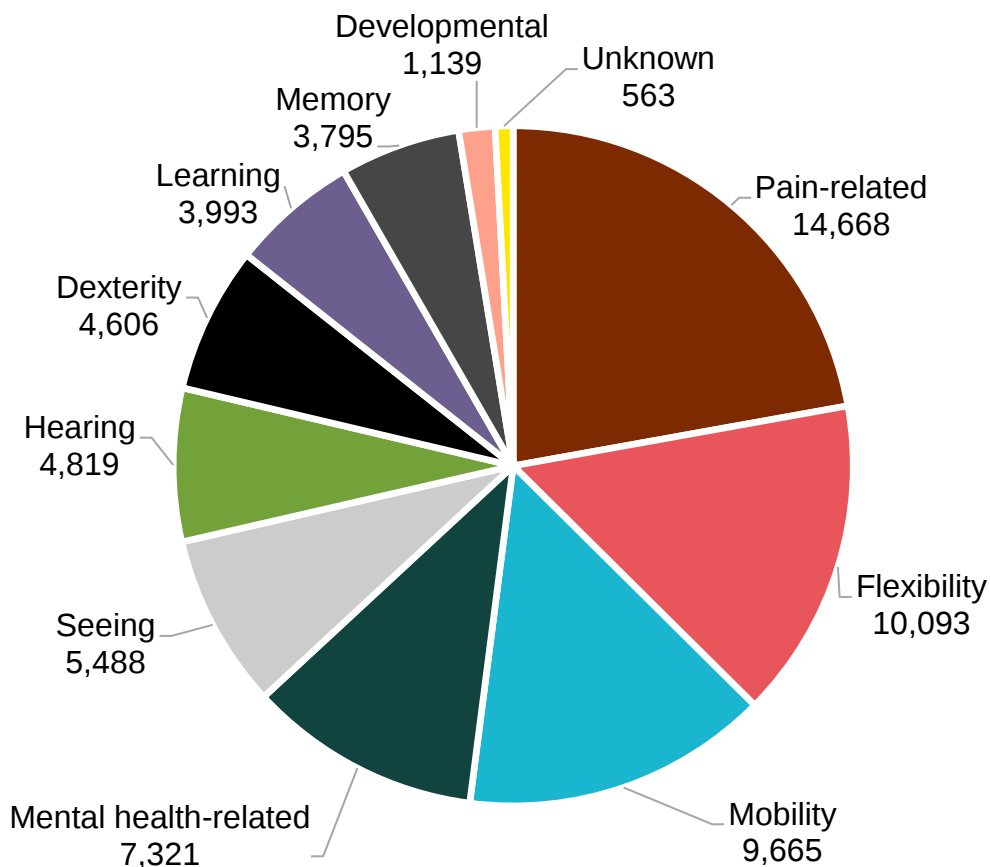


Photo of a woman and two men by Nathan Anderson from Unsplash

Types

- Pain-related – 14,668
- Flexibility – 10,093
- Mobility – 9,665
- Mental health-related – 7,321
- Seeing – 5,488
- Hearing – 4,819
- Dexterity – 4,606
- Learning – 3,993
- Memory – 3,795
- Developmental – 1,139
- Unknown – 563

A pie chart showing the types of disabilities:



Statistics Canada found Canadian residents living with one or more disabilities face many barriers. Furthermore, between the ages of 25 to 64:

- Persons with disabilities were less likely to be employed (59%) than those without disabilities (80%).⁵
- Those with mild disabilities had higher rates of employment (76%) than those with very severe disabilities (31%).⁵
- Among the persons with disabilities who were not employed or in school, two in five (39%) had the potential to work.⁵

Persons with disabilities were identified as more likely to be living in poverty, and the likelihood increased as the severity of their disability increased.

Framework Guiding Our Work

The framework for this plan was created with the following legislation in mind:

The B.C. Human Rights Code

This important piece of legislation promotes the rights of persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, so they will have full and free participation in all aspects of life. It sets the stage for further legislation to create more accessible and inclusive spaces.

The Accessible Canada Act

In 2019, the Accessible Canada Act was introduced with the aim of creating an accessible Canada by 2040. It follows the principle of “nothing about us without us”, which promotes including persons with disabilities in all aspects of planning for change.

The Accessible British Columbia Act

The Accessible B.C. Act came into law in June 2021. It legislates that all public sector organizations create an accessibility committee, an Accessibility Plan, and a feedback mechanism to help limit barriers to accessibility and inclusion. The Act was created based on the following principles that were also considered when creating this plan:

- Inclusion
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Self-determination (Independence)
- Universal design

Accessibility Standards

The Accessible Canada Act outlines several accessibility standards. Following this legislation, the B.C. Government will develop similar standards and regulations that relate to employment; delivery of services; the built environment; information and communications; transportation; health; education; and procurement. These standards were considered when identifying barriers for this plan.



Photo of a man using a wheelchair on a running track by Arisa Chattasa from Unsplash

About the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

Purpose

The District of Saanich created the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (ADEI) Council Committee in February 2023, with the purpose of:

- Advising Saanich Council and staff on:
 - matters relating to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that staff and community members experience or may experience in the course of interacting with the municipality, and
 - matters that promote diversity, equity and inclusion within existing and proposed District plans, policies, bylaws and services to ensure the fostering of a welcome and inclusive municipality.
- Reviewing the development of Terms of Reference and subsequent draft organizational accessibility plan and making recommendations in support of the creation of a mechanism for the municipality to receive public feedback on accessibility in accordance with the Accessible British Columbia Act.
- Making recommendations to Council that support the implementation of the Saanich Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy and Accessibility Plan.
- Promoting effective methods of communication and outreach to the broader community on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility matters.
- Inviting community groups to present and discuss at committee meetings and encourage groups to engage with the municipality in its ongoing planning process to allow the District to achieve a greater understanding of the strengths and needs of residents of diverse backgrounds and abilities.

- Providing an opportunity for community groups to present information on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility through delegations.

Membership

The committee consists of 11 members and is made up of a diverse group of individuals including (to the extent possible):

- a member of Council to serve as Chair, appointed by the Mayor;
- at least half of the members are persons with disabilities or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support persons with disabilities;
- at least one member identifies as an Indigenous person; and
- persons from diverse cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientation or gender identity or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, such persons.

The committee also includes a primary staff contact and professional support as required from other departments as well as a member of the Police Department.

The committee considers both internal and external factors that contribute to the broader effort of making Saanich more accessible and inclusive. It advises Saanich Council and staff on improvements that could be made, and it makes recommendations that support the implementation of the Saanich Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy.

The ADEI committee ensures that the requirements of the Accessible B.C. Act are met and contribute to the ongoing development of the Accessibility Plan as it evolves over time.

About the Accessibility Plan

Purpose

The District of Saanich's Accessibility Plan outlines how the district will continue its efforts to improve accessibility awareness and the accessibility of our facilities, programs, services, communications and employment opportunities from 2023 – 2026.

The plan builds on our current accessibility achievements to date and has been created to meet the legislated requirements of the Accessible B.C. Act that came into effect in June 2021. This plan has been created based on consultation and feedback from the District of Saanich Accessibility, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, members of the community, and District of Saanich staff.

Our Commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion

The District of Saanich strives to create an inclusive and welcoming culture, where people of all ages and abilities feel included and can equally access the facilities, services, programs and information. In our daily work, we endeavour to apply an accessibility lens to all aspects of what we do. To support this, the District of Saanich is partnering with the Saanich Police Department to enhance accessibility and reduce barriers.

Principles

'Nothing About Us Without Us'

It is the lived experience of persons with disabilities that makes them experts on creating accessible and inclusive spaces. Change can only occur when the voices of the people affected are included and heard.

Universal Design

It is important to plan for the different needs and variability of uses and people. Whenever possible, the creation of accessible spaces should not be reactionary; but rather proactive and thoughtful, with the needs of everyone in mind.

Equity

Access to facilities, programs, services, and opportunities should be the same for everyone. The District of Saanich is committed to removing barriers so that equity occurs.

Consultation

A staff Accessibility Committee was formed to identify accessibility barriers within the District of Saanich. Interviews with representatives from all departments, including Saanich Police, were conducted in May and June 2023. The Council Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee and Human Resources department were asked to identify barriers. The focus and categorization of this feedback was based on the accessibility barriers that are identified in the Accessible B.C. Act, including barriers to environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, and technologies. The accessibility standards outlined in the Accessible Canada Act were also considered.

In the fall of 2023, a second round of consultation and engagement was conducted inviting feedback from residents and visitors to the District of Saanich. This included three focus groups (two virtual, one in person), as well as an email and phone number which individuals could directly contact with feedback. We received extensive feedback, which was incorporated into the plan or, when the feedback related to existing actions, shared the feedback to support the departments with initiatives underway.

For a detailed list of those who supported the development of this plan see Appendix 2.

Priorities

The District of Saanich has already made some great steps towards greater accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities. Some of Saanich's achievements to date include:

- Rick Hansen Foundation Built Environment Evaluation.
- Website has options for colour contrast, print size, & language choice.
- Signage is being changed to include symbols and large print.
- Staff in Parks, Recreation and Community Services have received intensive training supporting working with children with disabilities, and through partnership with Island Health provide one-on-one inclusion support for day camps when possible.
- Some accessibility improvements are already being made to washrooms, elevator lifts, and accessible pathways.
- Employment practices are being reviewed for accessibility & inclusion.
- Capital Daily survey ranks Saanich council meetings as the most accessible.
- Developed and implemented a work-from-home policy.

Through consultation with the District of Saanich staff, the Saanich Police Department and the Council Advisory Committee, we heard feedback on areas of opportunity related to all barriers and identified several priorities for improvement. These priorities will be the focus for the initial stages of our Accessibility Plan, with further priorities being highlighted after consultation with the Saanich community. The three priority areas include:

- Priority One: Awareness and Training
- Priority Two: Built Environment Improvements
- Priority Three: Increase Access

Priority 1: Awareness and Training

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
1.1 Ensure information relative to accessibility is available to the public and employees.	1.1.1 Hire the staff position Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Consultant, to lead staff facing initiatives.	2023: Complete
	1.1.2 Create an 'accessibility hub' on the District of Saanich Website.	Beginning 2024
1.2 Promote inclusive behaviors and support employee knowledge and awareness of: the needs of people with various disabilities. accessibility barriers and strategies.	1.2.1 Provide training to new and existing employees on the following topics: • why accessibility & inclusion matters; • accessibility legislation; • types of disabilities, invisible disabilities, and intersectionality; • barriers to accessibility & inclusion: attitudinal, physical/environmental, communication, technological, systemic and sensory; • strategies for minimizing barriers to accessibility and inclusion; and • inclusive language and creating a sense of belonging.	Beginning 2024 Funding dependent*

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	1.2.2 Provide workshops to accompany the standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets that will be produced.	Beginning 2024
	1.2.3 Provide training in disability awareness as it relates to emergency preparedness.	Beginning 2025 Funding dependent*
	1.2.4 Provide accessibility communications training to ensure documents meet PDF/UA requirements.	Beginning 2025
	1.2.5 Create an effective model for staff training to support persons with disabilities that are in Saanich Parks, Recreation and Community Services programs.	Completed. Training is ongoing. Funding dependent*
	1.2.6 Continue to provide psychological health and safety training. Since 2021, over 300 employees have attended at least one course on this topic.	Ongoing Funded
1.3 Promote inclusion and collect data to support decision making.	1.3.1 Create a photo library with inclusive images for communications materials.	Beginning 2024 Funding dependent*

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	1.3.2 Collect diversity data	Subject to funding for HR systems*
	1.3.3 Create connections with other municipalities to foster sharing of accessibility achievements, opportunities for improvement and knowledge.	Ongoing

Priority 2: Built Environment Improvements

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
2.1 Improve the physical accessibility in Saanich facilities to ensure persons with disabilities can access services and gain employment with the District of Saanich.	2.1.1 Incorporate some of the recommendations made in our recent physical accessibility review. Thirteen facilities within District of Saanich are currently being assessed for possible accessibility improvements. Some adaptations have already been made, including accessibility improvements to some washrooms, elevator lifts, sound barriers, and pathways.	Ongoing Initiatives may be funding dependent*

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	2.1.2 Continue to action accessibility initiatives through the active transportation plan.	Ongoing Funded
	2.1.3 Continue the recreation centre wayfinding and signage multi-year project.	Ongoing Funded
	2.1.4 Continue to increase accessibility in District parks and playgrounds.	Ongoing Funding dependent*
	2.1.5 Continue to strive for increased accessibility in all public meetings. The Capital Daily survey ranks Saanich council meetings as the most accessible in our area.	Ongoing
	2.1.6 Continue to provide various methods for people to pay for various programs and services throughout the District of Saanich (for example property taxes can be paid online, in person with a cashier or via a drop box at the hall).	Ongoing
	2.1.7 Work collaboratively with BC Transit and other partners to ensure feedback on bus stop accessibility is relayed to relevant parties.	Begin 2024

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	2.1.8 Review accessible parking stalls within the District based on current accessibility needs of the community.	2025 Funding dependent*

Priority 3: Increasing Access

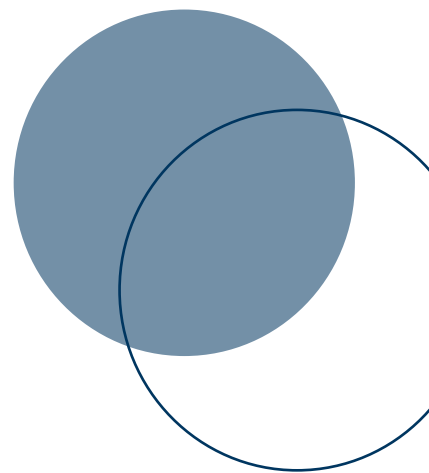
Objectives	Actions	Timeline
3.1 Create policies, procedures and tools to support inclusivity, accessibility, and safety.	3.1.1 Create an Accessibility Policy.	2024
	3.1.2 Produce standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets for employees.	2025
	3.1.3 Develop a catalogue of existing and newly procured assistive devices and accommodations for employees.	Ongoing
	3.1.4 Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform the procurement of goods, services, and facilities.	2025 Unfunded

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	3.1.5 Ensure all building permit requests meet the BC Building Code requirements.	Ongoing
	3.1.6 Review emergency planning procedures and equipment to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities have been considered.	2024 May require funding
	3.1.7 Draft a formal guide to personal injury and illnesses, including accommodation and return to work.	Ongoing
	3.1.8 Create an equity review guide to support application across corporate decision making.	2025
3.2 Receive feedback from the Saanich community and staff on accessibility barriers and achievements.	3.2.1 Create a feedback mechanism to support public and staff input related to accessibility.	2023: Complete
	3.2.2 Procure accessible engagement software.	2023 Funded
	3.2.3 Create a survey and conduct focus groups to further identify accessibility barriers and achievements in Saanich.	2024 Funded

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	3.2.4 Continue to promote the staff Accessibility DEI committee to ensure representation and increased feedback from employees with disabilities.	Ongoing
3.3 Ensure communications materials and systems are accessible.	3.3.1 Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform communications materials (documents, videos, emails, and social media).	2024
	3.3.2 Continue to write documents in plain language and ensure video recordings of Council meetings are provided.	Ongoing
	3.3.3 Update the District's website (saanich.ca) to include more accessibility features (it currently has options for colour contrast, print size, and language choice).	Ongoing
	3.3.4 Complete a review of the recreation registration systems for accessibility.	2025 Funding dependant*
	3.3.5 Complete a review of the recreation centre accessibility online information using feedback from individuals with disabilities.	2025 Funding dependant*

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
3.4 Ensure recruitment standards are accessible and inclusive.	3.4.1 Create a process for applicants requiring accommodations during the recruitment cycle.	2023: Complete
	3.4.2 Review employment practices for accessibility & inclusion.	Ongoing
	3.4.3 Ensure all job postings include information about accommodations and remove unnecessary position requirements.	Ongoing

*Funding to support many of the action items would need to be brought forward as part of the annual budget process before actioning.



Feedback

Your voice is important to us! We invite you to share ongoing feedback on this plan and on any barriers to accessibility and inclusion that you, or someone you know, has experienced in the District of Saanich.

To give your input, contact our human resources department at 250 475-1775 or via email at AccessibilityFeedback@Saanich.ca. If you have feedback specific to programs or services provided by the Saanich Police Department, please provide your feedback directly to Accessibility@SaanichPolice.ca.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The District of Saanich Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and evaluated every three years, with the first full evaluation of this plan beginning September 2026.

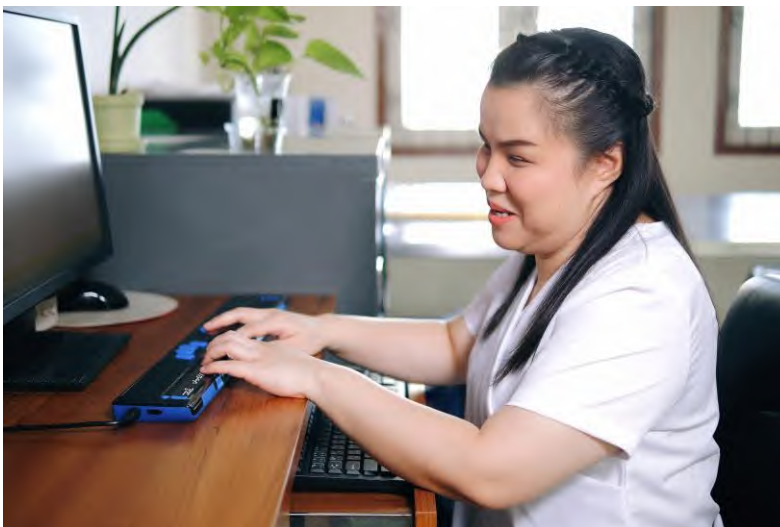
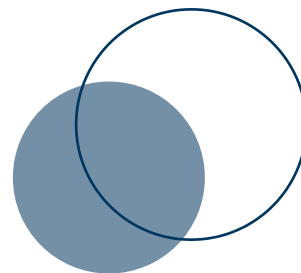


Photo of a woman using a computer by Chansom Pantip from iStock images



Appendix 1: References

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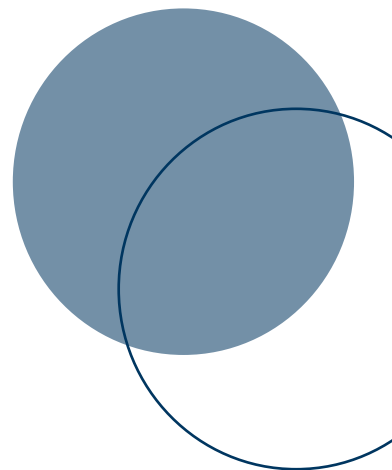
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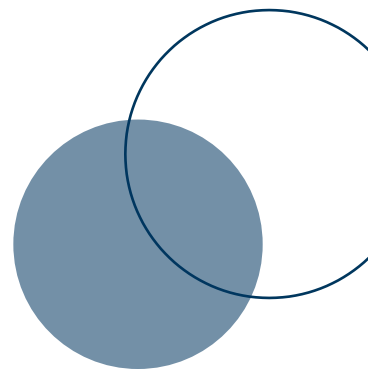


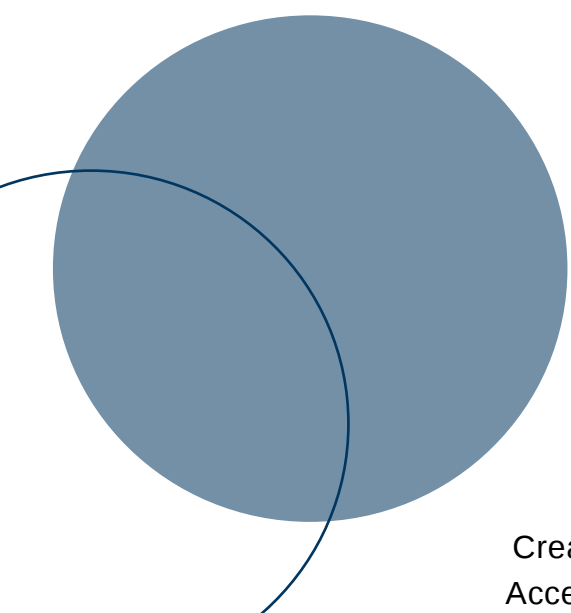
Appendix 2: Contributions

Many different people contributed their thoughts and suggestions to this document.

Thank you to the following groups and people:

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- Councillor Mena Westhaver, ADEI Committee Chair
- Community members of the ADEI Committee
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- Director of Corporate Services
- Deputy Chief Constable, Police
- Deputy Manager, Legislative Services
- Senior Manager, Transportation & Development
- Manager, Human Resources
- Senior Manager, Community Services
- Manager, Engineering Services
- Manager of Development, Engineering Services
- Manager, Sustainability
- Manager, Information & Technology
- Manager, Purchasing Services
- Manager, Inspection Services
- Manager, Housing Division in Community Planning
- Supervisor, Planning Administration
- Human Resources Advisor
- Transportation Planner
- Communications Team
- Occupational Health & Safety Specialist





Created in partnership with Melissa Lyon,
Accessibility & Inclusion Matter Consulting



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ACCESSIBILITY FRAMEWORK

2020



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

The City is built on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt People. The Songhees and Esquimalt Nations are part of the Coast Salish family and are descendants of the Lekwungen family groups. Victoria continues to build and nurture strong relationships with the Lekwungen Peoples.

ACCESSIBILITY WORKING GROUP.

The City gratefully acknowledges the contributions, dedication, and hard work of the Accessibility Working Group (AWG) members who have given selflessly to help achieve a more inclusive Victoria. Early in their mandate, this voluntary group of people identified the need for an Accessibility Framework and made the original recommendation to Council to undertake this work. They have provided valuable feedback, recommendations, and ideas, and contributed their expertise and knowledge to both City staff and Council on accessibility issues.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS & AGENCY PARTNERS.

This framework has also been made possible through the support, insights, and expertise of accessibility experts, service providers, advocates, and residents with lived experience. The City is grateful for their contributions.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

The City of Victoria is evolving and our understanding and capacity of accessibility is growing. New policies, strategies, and programs are being developed to create a connected and inclusive community. People with disabilities, among other equity-seeking groups, have not traditionally been included in planning and municipal service delivery processes. In order to achieve the vision identified in our Official Community Plan, the City must take positive steps to remove barriers, involve those with diverse perspectives and abilities, promote inclusion, and foster a positive and respectful community through its actions and services.

THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY.

The City of Victoria is committed to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers across its services, programs, and infrastructure, in order to benefit the community in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

The City of Victoria values the contributions from all people and

believes diversity strengthens the community. The City recognizes the essential knowledge and perspectives of people with lived experience of disability and commits to making sure those voices are part of community planning.

The City of Victoria will ensure staff and council are (1) aware of their roles in influencing accessibility for people with disabilities and (2) support positive community attitudes.

FOCUS AREAS.

The 2020 Accessibility Framework is categorized into three key focus areas:

- 1. Built Environment:** Promoting accessibility in urban policy, design, planning, operations, and development.
- 2. Governance and Services:** Removing barriers to and increasing participation in local government programs, services, information, bylaws, and public decision making.
- 3. Capacity and Collaboration:** Developing increased corporate capacity to deliver professional services in a

more accessible manner, building partnerships with accessibility service providers, and advocating to other levels of government and stakeholders for change.

“ By focusing on accessibility, we can directly improve the health, well-being, and personal outcomes for the people in our community. ”

Almost every Canadian has or will experience a disability, or cares about someone with accessibility challenges. Many of us will require supports at times throughout our lives. By focusing on accessibility, we can directly improve the health, well-being, and personal outcomes for the people in our community. This framework includes a set of goals, objectives, and directions that provide structure to support City planning to create a high standard of accessibility across municipal services and programs, infrastructure, and projects.



INTRODUCTION.

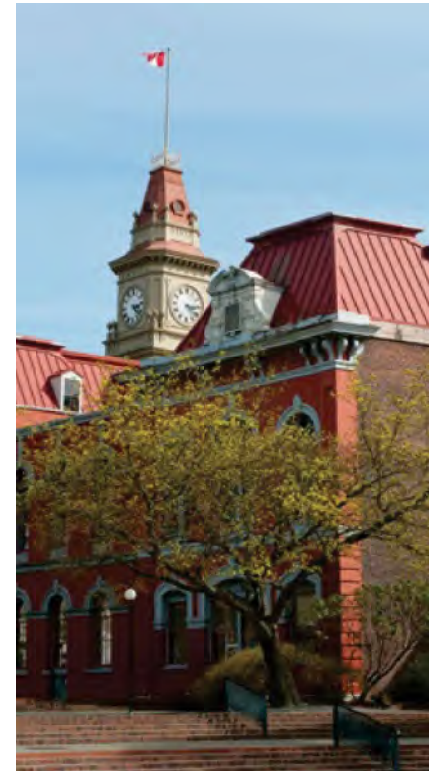
The City of Victoria is taking deliberate steps to make itself a more inclusive community. As part of these efforts, new policies, strategies, and programs are being developed to help nurture a connected and cohesive community that promotes well-being, belonging, resiliency, and vibrancy.

THE CITY OF VICTORIA.

The City is on a path to evolve our understanding and capacity related to accessibility. People with disabilities, among other equity-seeking groups, have not traditionally been included in the planning and municipal service delivery processes. In order to achieve the vision identified in our Official Community Plan, the City must take positive steps to remove barriers, involve those with diverse abilities, promote inclusion, and foster a positive and respectful community through its actions and services.

Many City programs, services, and infrastructure have been introduced over time, without full consideration of how these measures may affect people with different disabilities. This framework has been created to help guide the City in accessibility planning and will be put into action by each department as part of everyday business and service delivery.

A new Accessibility Program will be established as part of the City's work on equity and inclusion and set into motion a series of actions that aim to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. This program can be defined as the combination of resources, policy, guidelines, standards, directions, actions, tools, and information to deliver year-on-year accessibility improvements.



ACCESSIBILITY AS A PART OF EQUITY.

The 2020 Accessibility Framework applies accessibility to all aspects of City planning and operations, from our capital investments and municipal programs, to front-line services for residents and businesses. The associated City of Victoria Council Accessibility Policy and Short-Term Action Plan reinforces our commitment to accessibility and is part of an emerging, broader set of priorities and programs to support an inclusive, welcoming community.

Accessibility is a part of our broader equity and inclusion efforts that contribute to improved social health and well-being. The City has adopted the definition of equity to mean treating everyone fairly by acknowledging their unique situation and addressing systemic barriers. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal benefits and outcomes.

An intersectional research and policy lens recognizes that people have multiple and diverse identity factors shaping their perspectives, ideologies, and experiences. This approach addresses inequality and barriers to inclusion without isolating one factor of an individual's identity from another. It also recognizes that inclusion affects people differently, in part, to how their identities intersect and ultimately influence their experience. The City of Victoria is developing a Community Equity Lens that will embed



distributional, procedural, and structural inter-generational equity into the City's corporate policies guiding hiring, staff training and professional development, procurement, and civic engagement.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the BC Human Rights Code, and the courts recognize that no rights are absolute, and that a balance of competing interests is required. These laws guarantee rights such as freedom of expression and protection from discrimination and harassment based on gender identity or expression, ancestry, sexual orientation, and disability, among others. They require that all rights be given equal consideration. Our laws recognize that rights have limits in some situations, particularly where they substantially interfere with the rights of others. It is important to search for solutions to reconcile competing rights and accommodate individuals and groups. This can be challenging, controversial, and sometimes dissatisfying. However, it is a shared responsibility and will be made easier when we better understand the nature of one another's rights and obligations and show mutual respect for the dignity and worth of everyone involved.¹

Shifting our preconceptions, attitudes, and decision-making regarding disability requires careful self-examination, education, awareness, commitment, and planning. This framework focuses on a systematic and coordinated approach to reduce barriers in our community. We use data, lived experiences, best practices, and provincial legislation and guidance to understand community accessibility challenges and opportunities to support investment decisions that maximize positive outcomes.

“The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal benefits and outcomes.”

Over the next several years, the City will focus on accessibility programming and barrier reduction and prevention. Removing barriers from public places requires a structured approach to improve accessibility across infrastructure, programs, services, and information. The City also has an important role to improve accessibility by helping foster a dialogue that recognizes we are a stronger and healthier community when no one is left out.

ACCESSIBILITY AS A PART OF EQUITY.

WHAT IS MEANT BY ACCESSIBILITY?

"Accessibility" is a general term used to describe the degree of ease that something (e.g. device, service, place) can be used and enjoyed by people with disabilities. Accessibility requires conscious planning, design, and effort to ensure barriers are removed, and the environment is highly useable and practical for the general population.

The United Nations defines accessibility as "a precondition for an inclusive society for all and may be defined as the provision of flexibility to accommodate each user's needs and preferences."²

The Accessible Canada Act defines disability as "a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a function limitation— whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society."³

The concept of accessible design ensures both "direct access" (i.e. unassisted) and "indirect access" (i.e. compatibility with a person's assistive technology,

e.g., computer screen readers).

Accessibility can be accomplished by mainstream or Universal Design, which allows a person with a disability to use the same facility or service as everyone else (this is preferred), or with an alternative solution designed for people with disabilities.

" Accessibility requires conscious planning, design, and effort "



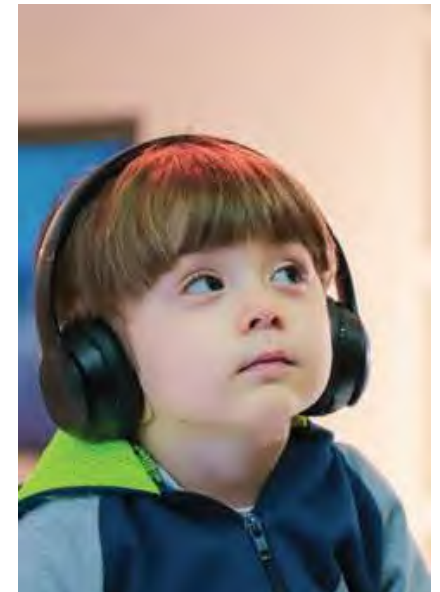
ACCESSIBILITY VS ACCOMMODATION.

Sometimes people with disabilities require personal accommodations in situations where accessible systems or programs are not yet in place. "Accommodation" refers to the changes or modifications made to a system (e.g. a policy or practice) to meet the needs of a specific individual or group. Accommodations can be options to overcome any type of barriers within an existing system.⁴

Accommodations may be a reasonable approach for important, temporary improvements, and may also be an appropriate response to rare or infrequent accessibility issues. These instances should be carefully monitored and managed to ensure longer-term accessibility solutions are identified and developed wherever possible.⁵

Accommodation is not the same as accessibility, and accessibility is always preferable to accommodation. Accessible systems are designed at the outset to be usable by as many people as possible, regardless of ability. Accommodations may be proactive or

reactive and may not effectively address everyone's needs. An accessible system would make sure the required functions / treatments were in place before being introduced. Removing barriers can be challenging and more expensive. In removing barriers, care should always be taken to avoid or minimize any unintended negative consequences for others.



UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY.

ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE.

A series of public engagement events were held to pursue a deeper understanding of the issues, challenges, and priorities we face in creating an accessible city. Face-to-face engagements over the last two years have included workshops, meetings, and focus groups to learn, discuss, and explore key issues, ideas, and insights. Community members were invited to provide feedback on accessibility challenges and priorities, both in writing and verbally. Opportunities were promoted within the community via social media, the City's website, through disability advocacy and support agencies, and directly to community members who had corresponded with the City on access and inclusion matters. The engagement sessions involved local organizations, service providers, and people with lived experience including those with caring responsibilities.

"A series of public engagement events were held to pursue a deeper understanding"



KEY INSIGHTS & THEMES.

A number of insights and themes emerged from the community that are integrated within this framework.

The first theme is the need for greater awareness, education, sensitivity, and understanding. Participants emphasized that the City, service providers, developers, and businesses need to learn how people with disabilities travel through the community, interact in public and private places, and participate in events and activities. In many cases, the very real barriers people with disabilities face mean they cannot fully participate in our community.

Another theme is the importance of accessibility in the built environment within and beyond the geographic

boundaries of Victoria. There are many people with disabilities who come from other communities to work, visit, or play in the City of Victoria. Participants identified the importance of retrofitting the built environment and applying new, consistent, and coordinated regional standards to support accessible transportation, parks, plazas, and public buildings.

The final theme from the engagement process identified how Victoria can use its role as a capital city to demonstrate leadership, set the example, and encourage a higher community standard to improve acceptance and the quality of life for people with disabilities.

UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY.

TYPES OF DISABILITIES.

Different disability groupings are used to help provide a broad understanding of experiences that may be shared or related to a disability, in terms of underlying health conditions, activity limitations, participation restrictions, and environmental factors. Disabilities can be encountered at any age and can be temporary or long term.

While there is no universally adopted set of disability groupings, it is important to recognize several common types and causes of disability. Some disabilities are visible while others are not immediately visible to others, such as asthma, brain injuries or concussions, allergies or environmental sensitivities, extreme fatigue, or chronic pain.

The following definitions are adapted from the World Health Organization (WHO) to help build awareness, but should not be interpreted as a complete list.

Pain: Pain-related disabilities often refer to long term or complex pain that may be caused by injury and may commonly occur with other disabilities.



Flexibility, Mobility, and Dexterity:

Disabilities related to mobility, flexibility, and dexterity include limb disabilities, manual dexterity, coordination, brain injuries and spinal-cord function.

Mental Health: Mental health-related disabilities refer to conditions that affect the mind and brain and the way a person thinks, feels, and acts.

Learning and Memory: Learning and memory disabilities include challenges related to skills such as reading, writing, and problem solving. They can also interfere with more complex and abstract skills related to the ability to organize, to reason, long and short-term memory, and attention span.

Visual Disabilities: Visual disabilities can range from partial sight loss to complete blindness.

Hearing: Hearing disabilities can range from partial hearing loss to complete deafness.

Developmental: Developmental disabilities are a diverse group of conditions resulting from physical or mental challenges that arise before adulthood. These conditions may create difficulties with language, mobility, learning, and independent living.

Other: There are many other types of disabilities that may affect how a person lives their day-to-day life.



UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY.

TYPES OF BARRIERS.

There are five general types of barriers.

1. Attitudinal Barriers: Behaviours, perceptions, and assumptions that discriminate against people with disabilities. These barriers often emerge from a lack of understanding, which can lead people to ignore, judge, or misunderstand those with disabilities.

An example of how an attitude can contribute to discrimination is speaking to a person's assistant, rather than the person with a disability, assuming that a person who cannot communicate in traditional ways cannot understand. Employee sensitivity and inclusivity training such as to improve interpersonal skills for customer service is one way to address this type of barrier.

2. Informational or Communication Barriers: When a person with a disability cannot easily receive and/or understand information that is available to others.

An example of a communication barrier is when information is available only in audio or verbal format and is

inaccessible to people with hearing loss. Ways of addressing this barrier include having sign language interpreters, closed captioning services, or written materials to accompany presentations.

3. Technological Barriers: When technology does not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

An example of this could be service computers at City Hall that are not accessible to people with sight loss. Ways of addressing this include providing computers with screen reader software and large print key labels.

4. Physical or Architectural Barriers: Elements of buildings or outdoor spaces that create barriers.

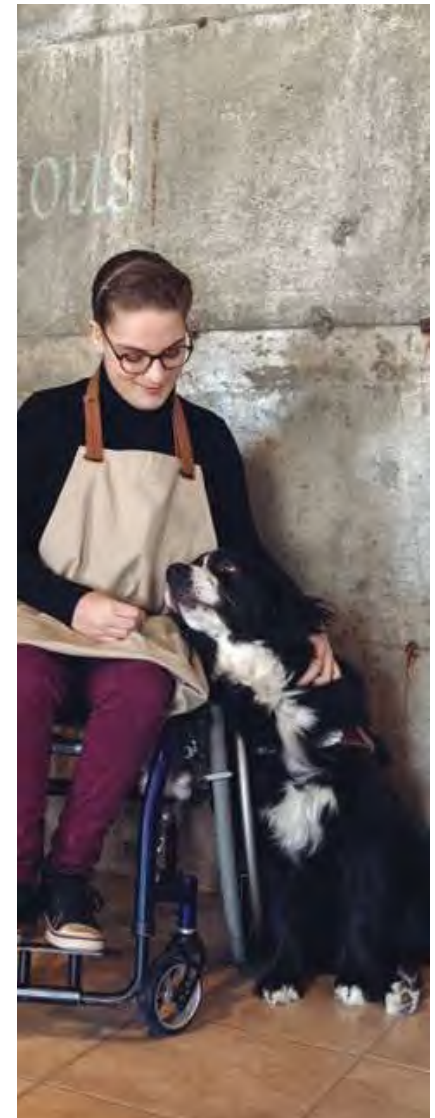
An example of this is utility poles placed in the sidewalk without adequate clearance for people using mobility scooters or wheelchairs to navigate. Ways of addressing this include retrofitting the built environment to create additional space and planning new sidewalks without obstructions.

5. Organizational or Systemic Barriers: Policies, procedures, or practices that may result in people with disabilities being mistreated or excluded from participating.

An example of this is when people with disabilities are not included at public consultation events because of the location or format of the event. Ways of addressing this is updating communication guidelines and visual standards to increase accessibility of public documents through alternate formats.

The City of Victoria is committed to removing existing barriers and preventing the creation of new barriers through the application of this framework and its actions.

“Barriers often emerge from a lack of understanding, which can lead people to ignore, judge, or misunderstand those with disabilities.”



OUR COMMUNITY PROFILE.

The City of Victoria is the capital of British Columbia, located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. The City is an attractive residence and destination for families, newcomers, workers, retirees, and visitors. It is home to 92,000 residents and supports an additional 300,000 people from across the region as the main business, tourism, and economic hub. The City's population is growing at a rate above the national average, with projections to reach 109,000 residents by 2038. It is estimated that currently 19,000 individuals in the City of Victoria live with one or more disabilities.

PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY IN OUR COMMUNITY.

The data on disability in Victoria relies on Statistics Canada's census data for the Province and the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD). The data in this section is taken from the CSD, which provides an important overall snapshot but is limited in its local details. The survey was completed by individuals aged 15 and over who in the 2016 Census "reported having a long-term condition or difficulty." This is the most recent official statistical information on disability in Canada and is available on a provincial and national basis.

The CSD is based on a "social model of disabilities," which in screening for disabilities requires a "limitation in daily activities." The CSD included questions on disability type and severity. There were 10 types of disabilities covered: seeing, hearing, mobility, flexibility, dexterity, pain-related, learning, developmental, mental health-related, and memory. The severity of the disabilities was based on the degree of difficulty (ranging from "no difficulty" to "cannot do at all") and frequency of daily activity limitation (from "rarely" to "always").

The CSD is currently available only at the provincial and national level. However, by using rates from the CSD (on presence of disabilities, types, and severity), we can develop an estimate of the number of individuals with disabilities in Victoria based on our census data. These estimates provide a general understanding regarding the number of people with a disability in our community and the existing spectrum of disabilities.

Disability, of course, is contextual and related to multiple barriers. Therefore, it is important to avoid preconceptions about what a disability is. The data does not provide a detailed analysis of Victoria, but provides the first insights on the accessibility needs within our City, how prevalent they are, and what the City can do to progressively remove barriers. There are more than 926,000 British Columbians over the age of 15 with some form of disability. This represents 25% of the population. As the population ages, the number of people with disabilities (and their severity) is likely to increase.

DISABILITIES IN VICTORIA.

In Victoria, it is estimated that approximately 21% of the population (about 19,000 people) have one or more disabilities. This means approximately 1 in 5 Victorians experience at least one disability. An estimated 1 in 10 Victorians over the age of 15 have severe or very severe disabilities.

Severe disabilities are conditions that profoundly affect a person’s ability to access basic community spaces, services, and programs, and require a higher level of support for essential, everyday needs.

As part of the research and data collection on disability in Canada, there are a number of important findings related to employment, poverty, and opportunities for people with disabilities.

The rate of people with a disability living in poverty is consistently higher in every age category compared to Canadians with no disabilities.

645,000 Canadians with disabilities had potential for paid employment in an inclusive labour market but were not employed.

Over 83,000 youth with disabilities were neither in school nor employed but were considered to have potential to work.

The 2019 Rick Hansen Foundation / Angus Reid Institute public opinion

survey on disabilities found more than two-thirds of Canadians expressed the concern that someone they know will face a disability over the next decade. Three in ten Canadians say accessibility is a consideration for them when they think about the places they will go and which they will avoid in their community.

“...approximately 1 in 5 Victorians experience at least one disability.”

FIGURE 1. (opposite page, 23)
Estimated Disability Types in Victoria. Numbers estimated using Statistics Canada Survey on Disability (2017) and profile of persons with disabilities for British Columbia information, applied to the population numbers for Victoria. “Total” disability rates include estimated population experiencing one or more of the included types. This survey was completed for persons 15 years or older.

In addition to the above points, the 2017 Statistics Canada Survey on Disability also found that:

1 in 5 Canadians (22%) of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over had one or more disabilities.

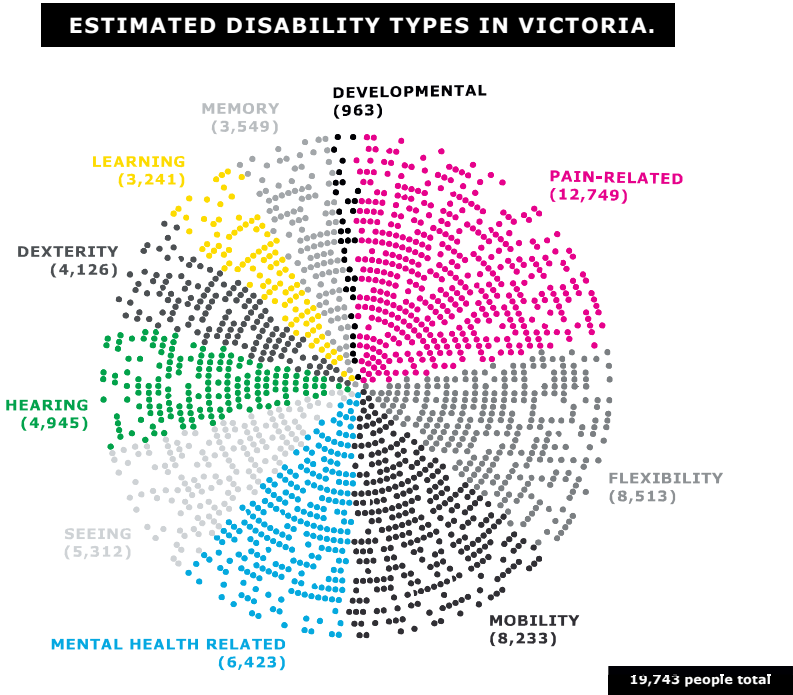
Pain, flexibility, and mobility-related disabilities along with mental health were the most commonly reported disabilities.

The prevalence of disability increases with age, affecting:

- 13% of those 15 to 24
- 47% of those 75 and older

Many Canadians who reported disabilities are part of the work force:

- 76% of those with mild disabilities
- 31% of those with severe disabilities



AGING AND DISABILITY.

The 2016 Census showed the percentage of seniors in Victoria's population is growing, with more than 18,000 Victorians over the age of 65 years (representing 22% of the population) up from 14,600 in 2006 (18.5% of the population).

Victoria's aging population (65 years and over) is forecasted to grow by 50% over the next 20 years, to 27,000 people. This is significant because the prevalence of disability increases with age and affirms the need to start systematically reducing accessibility barriers now.

With 20% of Canadians (25-64 years) reporting having a disability, compared with 38% of Canadian seniors aged 65 and older, it is clear that older populations will have higher rates of disability. While the overall level of disability increases with age, specific types of disability also become more common. According to the 2017 statistics, the disabilities reported by Canadians varied significantly by age with disabilities such as pain, flexibility, and mobility more than doubling for those 65 years and older.

DEVELOPING INSIGHTS FROM THE DATA.

Understanding the differences and commonality of disability types and groupings is critical when considering how and where the City designs, prioritizes, and funds improvements. Understanding our community profile can help to refine areas of City responsibility, where more attention is needed or where processes need to be in place to accommodate people with disabilities.

In the future, more accurate and detailed local accessibility information will help the City better understand our specific

accessibility challenges, needs, and priorities. This data gap is identified within the City's multi-year action plan.

“ Understanding the differences and commonality of disability types and groupings is critical when considering how and where the City designs, prioritizes, and funds improvements. ”



INVESTING IN ACCESSIBILITY.

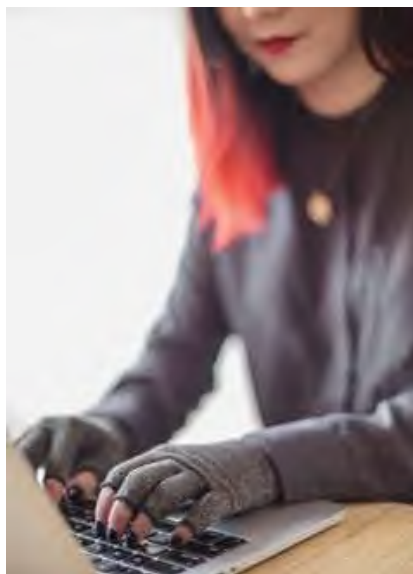
This framework aims to recognize the gaps and opportunities to improve accessibility throughout the City of Victoria. Thoughtful planning, meaningful engagement, training, and direct action will help deliver accessibility improvements in our community and across the region for decades to come.

All individuals have an inherent right to participate in a society where everyone is treated with dignity, given opportunity to participate, and provided access to their community so that they can fully contribute to society in their own unique way. Depending on how they are planned and built, urban environments, infrastructure, facilities, and services can impede or enable access, participation, and inclusion for people.

An inclusive society provides opportunities for meaningful participation in society. An inclusive society fosters diversity, reduces social and economic isolation, and promotes mental and physical health and well-being. Without inclusive opportunities, diversity may be scarce, and control over choice can be limited, reducing the ability for people with disabilities to make positive choices to their own lives.

As a community, we are richer with a diverse range of viewpoints and individual

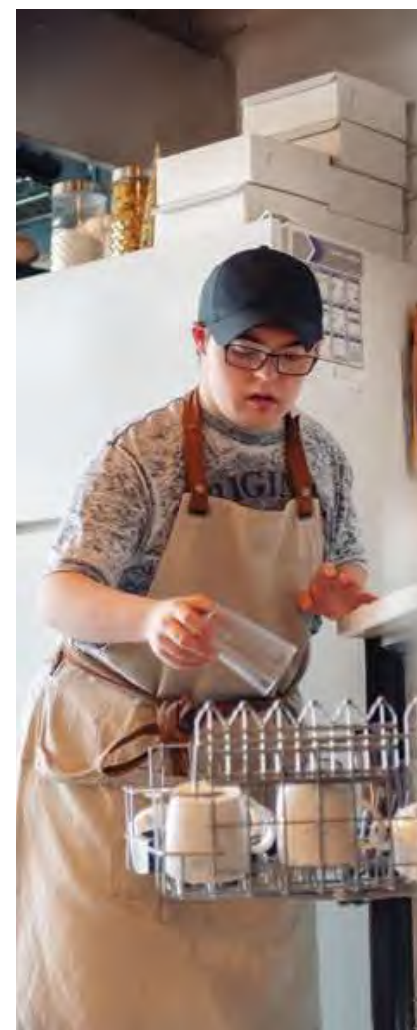
perspectives. Exclusion can lead to disadvantage and discrimination, which have far-reaching negative impacts across all aspects of life, including health, welfare, education, and employment. These impacts are felt beyond the individual, with families and the broader community all being negatively affected by a non-inclusive society. There is a strong economic imperative for increasing the inclusiveness of our society, to foster job opportunities that enhance the ability of people with disabilities to be independent and free from economic struggle.⁶



“ Thoughtful planning, meaningful engagement, training, and direct action will help deliver accessibility improvements in our community and across the region for decades to come. ”

Almost every Canadian has or will experience a disability, or cares about someone with accessibility challenges. Many of us will require support at times throughout our lives. By valuing the importance of accessibility, we can directly improve the health, well-being and personal outcomes for the people in our community. As policies of inclusivity and accessibility are implemented thoughtfully and effectively, we can increase employment and education rates, alleviate poverty, and grow a sense of belonging—not just for individuals living with a disability, but for their families and loved ones, too.

People with disabilities deserve the opportunity to be actively involved in local government decision-making processes, especially decisions that affect them directly. Inclusion enables participation by all, ensuring all voices are part of shaping a sustainable, healthy, and vibrant community.





THE CITY'S ACCESSIBILITY COMMITMENT.

The City's accessibility commitment is a statement that shares our view and promise to the community regarding accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities.

The City of Victoria is committed to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers across its services, programs, and infrastructure, in order to benefit the community in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

The City of Victoria values the contributions from all people and believes that diversity strengthens the community. We recognize the essential knowledge and perspectives of people with lived experience of disability and commit to making sure those voices are part of community planning and decisions.

The City of Victoria will ensure that staff and council are aware of their roles in influencing accessibility for people with disabilities and accept their responsibility to support positive community attitudes.

The commitment stated above is reinforced with the council accessibility policy, which is a part of our broader accessibility program.

KEY PRINCIPLES.

The City has adapted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) core principles that underpin the rights of people with disabilities in combination with the emerging provincial principles on accessibility, as follows:

Inclusion: All people should be able to participate fully in our community with dignity and individual autonomy.

Diversity: All people will be respected for their differences and lived experiences, regardless of ability, age, gender identity and expression, race, sexual orientation, sex, ethnicity, place of origin, and religion. Our framework acknowledges that other aspects of identity interact with ability to determine how individuals experience barriers and inclusion.

Respect: All people should be treated with respect so that they can make their own choices, contribute to civil society, and thrive through independence.

Collaboration: While the City does provide a leadership role, the City cannot address accessibility alone. We must collaborate with other stakeholders, levels of government, agency partners, advocacy organizations, and service providers to eliminate barriers and support innovations

towards an accessible society.

Adaptability: Disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change.

*"A city that is well designed is well designed for all. Accessibility, as a collective good that benefits all, should be considered a central component of good policy to achieve inclusive and sustainable urban development".*²



THE CITY'S ROLE.

The Community Charter and the Local Government Act are the legislative frameworks under which all British Columbian municipalities operate.⁸ Under this context, Victoria recognizes its local government responsibility to remove barriers across public spaces, programs, and services.

The key areas of responsibility that the City can consider in its goal of identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers include:

- **Public infrastructure**
- **City programs and services**
- **Municipal information, regulations, and policies**

And the City's role, related to:

- **Leadership by example**
- **Advocacy and partnerships**

The City will work within its jurisdictional authority to deliver accessibility improvements in the community, which aim to complement the actions of other regional agencies that play important roles in improving the outcomes for people with disabilities. Health authorities, regional and provincial governments, community associations, commercial and institutional enterprises, and non-profits all have a direct impact on the accessibility of

programs, infrastructure, and supports across our community. The City recognizes that strong leadership, collaboration, and coordination can help address accessibility challenges throughout our community.

The City must increase its awareness and skills so that it can achieve higher standards in accessible design, programs, and service delivery. The following elements represent the nature of accessibility work required from the City:

Capacity-building — Focused education and training: Increasing staff awareness, skills, knowledge, and competencies will help guide accessibility improvements in design and service delivery.

Prevention — Introducing new accessibility design standards: Design policies and standards for facilities, transportation, information, and services will help the City better integrate accessibility requirements into design processes, avoiding the creation of barriers so that accessibility can be optimized alongside other project requirements.

Removal — Retroactive accessibility improvements: Many barriers exist due to infrastructure, program and technology design and installation, implementation, decisions, and trade-offs made in the past.

Insights — Accessibility data and information: Information related to the community profile, types of barriers, their prevalence, impact, and patterns will help the City better manage priorities.

Planning — Prioritization and coordination: Project planning and prioritization should occur in an integrated fashion with annual program budget cycles, and coordinate with other capital and operational investments and programs to take advantage of any and all synergy opportunities to maximize benefits. The City must carefully balance a wide range of community interests, resources, and investments to achieve the required accessibility outcomes.

“ Victoria recognizes its local government responsibility to remove and prevent barriers across public spaces, programs, and services. ”



BALANCING NEEDS ACROSS COMMUNITY.

Planning and design of the City infrastructure, programs, and services requires careful balancing of changing and often competing needs. Trade-offs are always part of the design process, and designers, project managers, and service providers must carefully balance safety, equity, security, affordability, sustainability, quality, time, cost, and other important requirements. Evaluation and prioritization of these variables is required to effectively manage risk. Often situations arise where compromises are required for many users to ensure the minimum acceptable needs are met for all. Processes and tools to manage these variables will be developed through an iterative process and will improve over time through the implementation of this Framework and the Corporate Equity Lens.

Education and enforcement of the desired user behaviours are also important factors to ensure that infrastructure and programs function as intended. Having enhanced accessibility information, awareness, and creative approaches will help achieve better outcomes.

With accessibility requirements at the design table, the City will be in a better position to balance community needs, remove systemic barriers, promote inclusion, and create a more positive and respectful community.



FOCUS AREAS.



The framework is broken down into three key Focus Areas, outlined below, which group our actions into core segments of accessibility work that closely align with the business and structure of City work and planning. These Focus Areas embed goals and priorities across departments in the City, and are strengthened by the action plan, contained in the appendix. They are as follows:

Built Environment: Promoting accessibility as a collective good and a key component in urban policy, design, planning, and development. This focus area includes the systematic reduction and prevention of physical barriers across transportation and mobility, public facilities, and public spaces.

Governance and Services: Removing barriers and increasing participation in local government programs, services, information, bylaws, and public decision making.

Capacity and Collaboration: Developing increased corporate capacity to deliver professional services in a more accessible manner. This includes partnerships and advocacy with other levels of government and community stakeholders. Collaborating with community partners can set a strong example for community accessibility attitudes and awareness.

Each of these focus areas is detailed below with goals and key objectives. City services, infrastructure, and program design will rely on new lessons and tools that have been developed.

A key approach for addressing accessibility is "Universal Design". The concept of Universal Design was developed by a working group of architects, product designers, engineers, and environmental design researchers. The purpose is to guide the design of environments, products, and communications. The principles can be used to evaluate existing designs, guide the design process, and educate stakeholders about characteristics of more usable services, products, and environments.

THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN.

FOR INCLUSIVE SERVICES & SPACES.

Universal design principles can be applied to a variety of situations in the municipal context as well—for example, community recreation or arts programs, services at City Hall, public consultation activities, or new infrastructure designs. Consideration of these principles in the development and ongoing management of City services can support increased accessibility across our City.

EQUITABLE USE



The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

1

FLEXIBILITY IN USE



The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

2

SIMPLE & INTUITIVE USE



Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language, skills, or current concentration level.

3

PERCEPTIBLE INFORMATION



The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

4

TOLERANCE FOR ERROR



The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

5

LOW PHYSICAL EFFORT



The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, with minimum fatigue.

6

SIZE & SPACE FOR APPROACH & USE



Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

7

- Principle 1:** Equitable Use:
The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
- Principle 2:** Flexibility in Use:
The design takes into account a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- Principle 3:** Simple and Intuitive Use:
Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
- Principle 4:** Perceptible Information:
The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- Principle 5:** Tolerance for Error:
The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- Principle 6:** Low Physical Effort:
The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, with minimum fatigue.
- Principle 7:** Size and Space for Approach and Use: Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

FOCUS AREA (1)

BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

A liveable community enhances an individual's independence, accommodates their needs, and fosters engagement in civic, economic, and social aspects of the community. People with disabilities can live more freely when the built environment is designed and/or modified to support their needs. Technology can also play a significant role in removing liveability barriers.

Creating liveable communities for people of all abilities is more than modifying the physical environment. It applies to activities, facilities, housing, road design, walkability, transportation, environmental sensitivities and supportive services, and creates opportunities for social connection, engagement, and well-being. Infrastructure investments will need to incorporate universal design principles for public spaces including buildings, open spaces, parks, playgrounds, plazas, and streetscapes. We will also need to continue to develop and apply design standards that align with industry and other municipal best practices.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY.

Mobility relates to the ease of moving, whereas accessibility may address the ease of reaching desired destinations. Planning for accessibility considers safer public and private transportation systems, and

incorporates decisions related to rights of way, land use, and development that reduce barriers and effort required to access important destinations and services.



BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES.

The City owns more than 100 buildings including recreation centres and major event venues such as the Save-On-Foods Memorial Arena, Royal Athletic Park stadium, and the Victoria Conference Centre.

In addition, the City maintains buildings that support other municipal services such as park operations, public works, fire and rescue, and police operations.



PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND PUBLIC PLAZAS.

The City of Victoria's parks, plazas, and open spaces are a vital piece of the City's character, culture, and vibrancy. Serving residents and visitors alike, they offer important opportunities for socializing, recreation, relaxation, play, and learning as well as providing an opportunity to connect with nature. These spaces (both hardscape and softscape) are intended to contribute to quality of life for people of all ages and abilities.



WHAT WE HEARD.

Public input highlighted the importance of accessible public spaces such as village centres, pedestrian pathways, parks, recreation facilities, and public transit. Stakeholders noted examples of areas in the City with high standards of accessibility and areas where there were significant concerns. Examples of existing barriers included a lack of wheelchair access at intersections, width and conditions of sidewalks, playground equipment diversity,

designated places for mobility aid parking, access to accessible parking, public transit and taxis, and the overall need for improved design standards. Victoria is one of the oldest cities in British Columbia, and as a result, its infrastructure reflects 150 years of varying urban design standards. This provides an opportunity to innovate and rethink urban design standards in order to promote inclusive and accessible design while recognizing our history.



GOAL.



To systematically remove and prevent barriers in public parks, open spaces and plazas, mobility systems and City-owned buildings and facilities.

Key Objectives

- To prevent and remove barriers from City infrastructure and places, transportation infrastructure, facilities, parks, and open spaces.
- To evaluate and prioritize retrofits to existing City infrastructure, buildings, and spaces to meet updated accessibility standards.
- To improve the availability and accessibility of transportation services, mobility options and parking infrastructure for people with disabilities.

ACTIONS TAKEN OR UNDERWAY.

Introduced new accessible features at City intersections, pedestrian signals, and tactile domes, all of which are now becoming standard for new or replacement downtown and village locations.

Completed new sidewalk and pathway upgrades and widening projects to support mobility scooters and aids.

Upgrading transit shelters and dedicated loading zones for accessibility support vehicles such as HandiDART buses.

Modernization of accessible elevators and staircase markings at parkades.

Completed Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ ratings for 22 City-owned buildings.

The Cecelia Ravine Park expansion project included a wheelchair-accessible pathway to the Galloping Goose pathway, delivery of a new accessible public washroom, and included accessible playground surfaces and play equipment.

Upgraded several City-owned facilities with Universal Design features in public washrooms, new access ramps, power-operated doors, a new universal change room at the Crystal Pool, and a wheelchair lift at the Victoria Conference Centre.

Introduced new accessible picnic tables and outdoor furniture as well as accessible outdoor fitness equipment and play features in parks.

Developed a selection list for low-allergen plantings.

Designed wheelchair-accessible planting beds for some community gardens.

Initiated accessibility audits in key parks.



FOCUS AREA (2)

GOVERNANCE AND SERVICES.

People with disabilities face multiple forms of barriers preventing full participation in local government activities, including accessing services, information, events, discussions, and engagements.

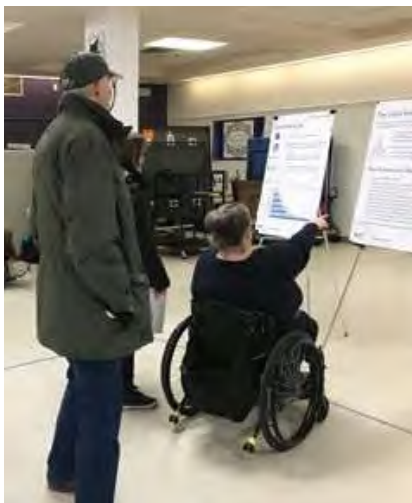
Universal Design principles also translate to the focus area of government programs and services. Accessible government enables increased opportunity for participation in the system of municipal business and public life, so that people with disabilities can engage with matters that affect their own lives and their communities.

These opportunities may include the right to vote, be elected, gain employment, participate in public affairs (including serving on advisory committees), and enjoy full access to City services including the website, City documents, and webcasting of council meetings. Participation is important to the City because it helps the City arrive at better decisions, informed by a diversity of voices within our community.

MUNICIPAL PROGRAMS, SERVICES, POLICIES, INFORMATION AND BYLAWS.

Municipal Planning for accessibility allows people with disabilities to take full advantage of municipal programs, services, and information. Through the review of existing services, bylaws, and information platforms and the consideration of accessibility in new regulations and service planning, the City can ensure that people with disabilities have more opportunities to participate.

MUNICIPAL DECISION MAKING.



Making it possible for people with disabilities to participate in government decision-making processes requires intentional efforts and resources to create a supportive environment for different needs. These efforts will allow all residents to engage more fully on matters that affect their own lives and communities.

WHAT WE HEARD.

Public and stakeholder outreach identified several barriers. The most common were the need for full access to City Council meetings, the need for document formats suitable for those with sight loss, information for people with hearing loss, and making public information easily searchable and navigable via City websites. Making elections fully

accessible for people with disabilities was identified as a critical goal. Improving access to information through technology and reviewing bylaws to reduce barriers were identified as important strategies to support access to municipal programs and services.



GOAL.

To provide all residents and visitors with equitable access to municipal programs, services, information, engagement opportunities, and the ability to exercise their statutory rights.

Key Objectives

- To increase customer service support across all City public service counters to serve people with visible and non-visible disabilities.
- To increase offerings of recreational program opportunities for people with disabilities.
- To increase opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in Council decision-making processes, City engagement activities, City-led special events and/or ceremonies.
- To improve accessibility of municipal election processes.
- To consider accessibility as part of policy development processes.



- To review and develop municipal bylaws considering accessibility needs.
- To increase diverse participation in City advisory committees and boards.
- To increase the accessibility of the City website, closed captioning, and online resources.
- To continue to incorporate support for people with disabilities as part of City-wide emergency preparedness and planning.

ACTIONS TAKEN OR UNDERWAY.

Partner with Island Health in the Supportive Child Development Program to provide one-on-one assistance for children who require extra support to participate in summer camp programs.

Inclusive swimming lesson programs at Crystal Pool.

Initiated review of the Council Procedures bylaw to find opportunities to increase accessibility in City decision making.

Improvements to the inclusion process for recreation programs regarding managing allergic risks.

Introduced online open data platform and website that is accessible for those using screen readers.

Installation of a hearing loop and braille directional signs at City Hall for Council meetings.

Piloted accessibility improvements in town hall meeting.

Conducted an air quality test in City Hall to test and monitor air quality for allergens.

Installation of Universal Design features to the public washrooms in City Hall and Council Chambers.

Switched to scent-free cleaning products to improve air quality.

Delivery of the "helping hand" program for solid waste management to support people with disabilities.

Initial electronic / remote access capabilities for City meetings.

Introduced mail ballot voting, curbside voting, special voting opportunities at care facilities, and legislated ballot marking assistance.

Approved an accessible voting machine for next voting opportunity.

Introduced accessible Council meeting features (webcast meetings and closed captioning).

Developed additional platforms for participating in City-wide engagement processes.

FOCUS AREA (3)

CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION.

The City must increase its knowledge and develop the skills and standards to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers across programs, services, and projects. The City also has a role to play in helping support a new standard of accessibility across the broader community.

In Victoria there are several organizations focused on improving the lives of people living with disabilities. Collaborating with these stakeholders will help the City to make better-informed decisions that result in positive impacts. These organizations are often a direct and essential support system for people with disabilities and are considered important partners and experts.

WHAT WE HEARD.

The City also has an important responsibility to lead by example to improve community attitudes related to disability. It has been recognized that some “attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities may be considered a significant barrier to their full access and inclusion. International consultation teaches us that the attitudes towards people with disabilities are often determined by ignorance, fear, or the lack of opportunity to interact. Supporting positive attitudes involves increasing awareness and changing negative perceptions.”¹⁰

The City has a leadership opportunity to integrate accessibility as part of its core business, and demonstrate high standards of inclusion and communication.

Improved awareness, knowledge, understanding, and new capabilities are required to make positive accessibility impacts. Building corporate capacity is done through education, awareness, hiring, and training and can be supported in the community through stakeholder communications engagement. Working closely with community organizations will help give a voice to individuals and groups who need support.

The Accessibility Working Group identified the importance of ensuring the voice of lived experience is always part of accessibility actions in municipal planning. The group also recognized that people with disabilities are experts in their own right. They not only provide expertise in the area of accessibility, but also come with other skills and abilities valuable to the process which need to be recognized and respected. The City subscribes to the principle of inclusion and recognizes that we must partner together to truly understand the perspectives, information, and ideas of persons with lived experience.

Throughout the public engagement process, the City heard about the importance of fostering positive attitudes regarding disabilities. The City’s actions on improving accessibility for the infrastructure, services, programs it controls, and the services



it regulates can set an example for the broader community and people’s ability to recognize barriers that people with disabilities encounter daily. Removing these barriers can create equality, independence, choice, and control to improve overall quality of life.

GOAL.

To lead accessibility change-making within the City mandate and promote collaborative, positive attitudes in our community.

Key Objectives

- To continue offering enhanced training and awareness programs to foster a welcoming corporate environment for people with disabilities.
- To demonstrate inclusivity in City publications and materials.
- To introduce resources and processes to support and coordinate corporate accessibility efforts, projects, and programs.
- To facilitate regular activities to improve the City's knowledge and understanding of lived-experience and accessibility challenges across our community.
- To continue to engage with and collaborate with local disability stakeholder groups to gather insights and lived experiences.

ACTIONS TAKEN OR UNDERWAY.

Creation of the City's Accessibility Working Group to provide input and advice on accessible planning and action.

Introduction of accessibility statement on all employment postings.

Offering a long-standing respectful workplace policy and staff training program.

Accessibility awareness training for senior leaders and key staff members.

Continued departmental liaison with community disability and accessibility resources.

Provision of annual customer service training on accessibility inclusion for staff at Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre.

Introduce assessment of accessibility impacts as part of staff reports to Council.





IMPLEMENTING THE FRAMEWORK.

Taking action on accessibility will be guided by the commitments in the framework, and supported by good governance, an action plan, resources, and regular reporting on key measures to ensure we are on a trajectory of success. The City is a dynamic environment, so the program must also respond to changing circumstances and priorities, while making meaningful progress to accessibility. The following outlines how the City will manage these challenges to purposefully advance the vision of a more inclusive, barrier-free society.

ACCESSIBILITY AS A PART OF BROADER INCLUSION EFFORTS.

The Accessibility Framework addresses a single element of community equity and inclusion and is part of an important set of emerging actions and priorities that aim to improve overall social health and well-being across the City. As planning and programs develop, the City will continually assess how to best integrate these disparate but

related initiatives, to maximize impact and resource efficiency. The City's work on equity will plan and determine the most appropriate role of an advisory body, made up of persons with lived experience, to help guide the City and its programs related to issues of accessibility and inclusion.

TAKING ACTION.



A series of short-term actions have been identified to commence implementation of the Accessibility Framework and to support the objectives laid out in this document. Actions will form a part of the City's overall Accessibility Program. Each year the City will identify, implement, and integrate accessibility through its annual service planning, capital planning, and project management processes. Implementation of this Framework and reporting on accessibility accomplishments will be included in annual City reporting cycles.



PROVINCE OF BC.

Creating a more accessible City of Victoria requires an understanding of the policy and legislative context. In the absence of an accessibility-specific legislation in British Columbia, such as a general Disability or Accessibility statute, the province relies on the BC Human Rights Code. The BC Human Rights Code (the Code) is a law enacted by the BC legislature in 1973.¹¹

The purposes of the Code are to:

- Foster a society in BC where there are no impediments to full and free participation in the economic, social, political, and cultural life of BC.
- Promote a climate of understanding and mutual respect where all are equal in dignity and rights.
- Prevent discrimination prohibited by the Code.
- Identify and eliminate persistent patterns of inequality associated with discrimination prohibited by the Code.
- Provide a means of redress for those persons who are discriminated against contrary to the Code.

The Code prohibits discrimination in certain areas of activity (for example, employment). The Code also creates the

tribunal and sets up a process for making and resolving complaints of the types of discrimination it covers.¹² The City of Victoria’s Accessibility Framework seeks to ensure that the listed purposes of the Human Rights Code above can be taken in stride for people with disabilities who live in or visit our community.



The Province’s jurisdiction includes areas of responsibility, such as building code, education, health care, and income assistance. In 2019 the Province re-established the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. The role is intended for the promotion and protection of human rights through education, research policy development, and public investigation into issues of systemic discrimination. Further, in September 2019 the Province announced consultation on new Accessibility Legislation.

The provincial government also has a plan titled “Building a Better BC for People with Disabilities.” The plan views an inclusive society as one that provides opportunity for persons of all abilities to fully participate in society, which requires challenging our attitudes and beliefs about disabilities. The motivation comes from recognizing the value and contributions that people with disabilities make to our workplaces, communities, and economy.¹³



CANADA.

The Canadian Disability Rights movement began in the late 20th century and advocates for Canadians with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. On December 9th, 1975, the United Nations (UN) issued the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons outlining key rights and encouraging countries to protect people with disabilities' rights and opportunities.

In 1981, the UN promoted the International Year of Disabled Persons, which catalyzed Canadian public and political interest to secure the rights and opportunities of people with disabilities in the final draft of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom and the Employment Equity Act, 1986.¹⁴ During the 1980s and early 1990s, a global recession deeply affected the disability community. Escalating public debt and deficits in Canada produced an era of fiscal restraint and austerity. During this time social assistance was slashed, subsidies to disability organizations were removed, and official political liaisons were reorganized or removed.¹⁵

In response, the Canadian Disability Rights Movement increased its efforts and by the 2000s, saw significant revival in public interest and political commitment. On March 11th, 2010 Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights

of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD), alongside other countries. The ratification committed Canada to a series of principles and measures to improve the socio-economic well-being of the disability community while improving their legal and political rights. In June 2019, Canada legislated the Accessible Canada Act (Bill 81).

The international, federal, and provincial policy and legislative context is rooted in the Disability Rights Movement. It is important to understand how the City of Victoria aligns and contributes to broader accessibility efforts.

“...encouraging countries to protect people with disabilities' rights and opportunities.”

Following the decision to sign the UNCPRD, the Accessible Canada Act (Bill C-81) received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019. Its goal is to create a barrier-free Canada through proactive identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility. Furthermore, Canada has a strong framework for protecting the human rights of Canadians. The Canadian Human Rights Act promotes equality of opportunity

and protects people from discrimination. Bill C-81 supports the objectives of the Canadian Human Rights Act and does not diminish any obligations under that Act.

The pivotal direction of the Accessible Canada Act is to enhance the full and equal participation of all persons, especially people with disabilities, in society. This is achieved through the realization of a Canada without barriers.¹⁶ The Accessible Canada Act creates new standards and regulations for sectors with federal jurisdiction, which includes banking,

telecommunications, transportation, and the Government of Canada.

“Creating a barrier-free Canada through proactive identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility.”





INTERNATIONAL.

In 2006, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was released with a purpose to “promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.” The UNCRPD is a blueprint to ensure people with disabilities have access to the same rights and opportunities as everybody else—it re-affirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must be able to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It stipulates that signatory countries adopt the following key commitments:

Adopt appropriate legislative and administrative measures to abolish existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices that constitute discrimination against people with disabilities.

Promote and develop universally designed goods, services, equipment, and facilities and embrace principles of Universal Design in the development of standards and guidelines.

Provide accessibility training for professionals to provide effective and non-discriminatory assistance and services to people with disabilities.

The commitments within the UN Declaration reinforce the responsibility of the City to eliminate obstacles in society, such as physical access to buildings, roads, and transportation, and access to information through written and electronic communications. Equally as important, the Convention identifies the City’s responsibility to reduce stigma and discrimination and to embrace respect for differences as part of our collective human diversity, which are often reasons why people with disabilities are excluded from education, employment, and health and other services.

“Promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.”

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To be discussed on September 9, 2014

Bowen Island Municipality

Accessibility Action Plan

2023-2026

Submitted Fall 2024

[COVER/PHOTO?]

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Message from Council

[from Mayor – SEF and AJ to help as requested]

Acknowledgements

Committee Members:

- Kathy Pichora-Fuller, Chair
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Community Organizations

- Canadian Organization of Blind and DeafBlind**
- Seniors Keeping Young*
- BI Community Health Centre
- ???

Delegations

- Bowen
 - o Bowen Community Centre
 - o Medical Assured Loading
 - o Recreation (beach wheelchair/railings)?
- External
 - o Auracast (Jill - May 6)
 - o Accessibility in National Parks (– June 3)
 - o Dementia Inclusive Communities (Habib – July 15)

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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

a. Territorial Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that Bowen Island's ancestral name is Nexwelelexwm, part of the unceded traditional territory of the Skwxwu7mesh Nation, who have stewarded this land for generations. We are grateful to live, work and share community on this beautiful island in At'l'ka7tsem (Howe Sound). We aspire to ensure that by working together all people will be able to participate fully in sharing community here.

b. About Bowen Island

The earliest records show that the Squamish Nation hunted and fished here, and used Bowen island as a neutral meeting ground. European settlers first came to Bowen Island over 100 years ago. Currently, Bowen Island is one of 13 local trust areas and island municipalities that make up the Islands Trust Area. In 1999, Bowen Island became a municipality. The island is near to West Vancouver (20-minute ferry sailing from Horseshoe Bay to the Village of Snug Cove), but it has a unique rural island character, with its own history regarding accessibility and its own aspirations for an accessible future.

The People:

Size of Population and Change over Time: In 2021, 4,256 people lived in 1,725 households on Bowen Island. The population of Bowen Island grew by 105.1% over the 30 years between 1991 and 2021. There was a 17.5% change between 2016 and 2021, with the population rising from 3,680 to 4,256. This change on Bowen Island was more than twice the change (7.3%) in Vancouver and in BC (7.6%) between 2016 and 2021.

Population Characteristics: In 2021, there were slightly fewer females (48.8%) than males (51.2%). Just over 1/5 (22.5%) of the people on Bowen had immigrated from another country, with about a third of them (310 of 950) coming from the United Kingdom. Ethnicities included European (90.53%), East Asian (3.08%), Indigenous (2.84%), Latin American (1.18%) and other groups (< 1%). There were 260 people (6.6%) who reported being from a visible minority population. Religious beliefs were reported to be secular 68.3%, Christianity 28%, Buddhism 1.5%, and Judaism 1.4%.

Population Age Profile and Change over Time: In 2021, the average age of the population was 46.1 years, and the median age was 50 years. The basic age distribution was 14.9% children (0 to 14 years), 59.9% people between 15 and 64 years of age (including 25% who were 50 to 64 years of age), and 25.1% who were 65 years of age or older (including 1.6% who were 85 years of age or older). Notably, the population is aging, with the largest change between 2016 and 2021 (39%) seen in the group 65 years of age and older, with less change (12.3%) in the group 15 to 64 years of age, and little change (0.8%) in the age group under 15 years of age. The aging of the population on Bowen Island seems to be due to long-time island residents who are

growing older, as well as new residents who have chosen Bowen Island as a retirement destination. It seems that inter-generational households may be increasing in number and, given the importance of care partners of people living with disabilities, evolving family structures may be important to consider in community planning in general and specifically in accessibility planning.

Expected Future Trends: Assuming that the 25% of the Bowen Island population who were 50 to 64 years old in 2021 continue to reside on Bowen, then there will be significant further increases in the portion of the population who are seniors. Longevity continues to increase in Canada; the expected lifespan in 2022 was 83 years. Importantly, there are marked increases with age in many disabilities (e.g., hearing, vision, mobility, cognitive declines). According to Stats Canada, in 2022, 40.4% of Canadians 65 years of age or older experienced a disability. Those over 85 years of age are the most likely to experience more complex combinations of disabilities that affect participation in everyday life. Accessibility planning can support healthy aging.



The Land:

Bowen Island is 63.6 km², with a population density of 84.9 people/km². The village of Snug Cove is the location of the BC Ferry Terminal on Bowen Island and it is the hub for municipal, educational, commercial, entertainment, and tourism activities. Across Bowen Island, there are 24? 27? 29? neighbourhoods, each with their own history, character, and geographical features that are important to consider in accessibility planning. In addition to residential and rural areas, the island includes large areas of crown land, ecological reserve, environmentally sensitive areas, and parkland with extensive trails. Bowen Island has a total of 48 municipal beaches and coastal access points that range from sandy beaches that are frequently visited by the community, to rocky coasts that disappear at high tide, to steep cliffs with ocean views. A beach classification system to describe these diverse coastal ecosystems was created as part of the 2017 Parks Plan (<https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/parks-recreation-culture/beaches/>). Accessibility is important in Snug Cove, in the neighbourhoods, and in these varied and highly valued natural areas.

c. History of Accessibility on Bowen

The present accessibility action plan builds on long-standing awareness about accessibility in the community that began over 100 years ago.

Some responses to the open-ended survey question: What Does Accessibility Mean to You?

To me accessibility is creating a community and providing services for all our..., especially keeping seniors and children/youth in mind when creating infrastructure and services and support.

No barriers. No judgement. Community help and support. Everyone supported. Elders are not a problem to be solved they are a resource to learn from and treasure.

To me, accessibility is about having life on the island be meaningful and usable for as many people as possible. It's about removing barriers to participation and allowing people to engage with each other and what the island has to offer in a way that supports and encourages everyone to participate as their full selves.

Everyone is able to access opportunities, environments, information, inclusiveness in all aspects of optimal daily and longer-term living.

No one is unable to participate due to a lack of accommodations.

A centralised and physically accessible space for our community's social, commercial, and civil needs, where people of all ethnicities, cultures, faiths, genders, and sexualities feel both safe and welcome.

*Getting around easily and being able to access all places with ease.
Access to buildings and beaches.*

See Appendix A

In February 2022, Cathy Bayly from the Bowen Island Museum & Archives wrote about an interview Councillor Alex Jurgensen:

"There is a long history of blind people visiting Bowen Island beginning when the Terminal Steamships Company (1902-1920) brought groups of people to Bowen for picnics. The Union Steamship Company (1920-early 1960s) carried on the tradition, offering free transportation on their steamships to Bowen for the annual picnics for the blind.

During the Union Steamships era, the Fraternal Order of Eagles sponsored fishing camps for the blind. This captured the attention of Captain M.C. Robinson, who was the CNIB director for British Columbia and Alberta. He was blinded at eighteen while serving in the First World War and understood the problems of adjusting to a new way of life. Robinson became the moving force behind the idea of developing a recreation and training centre for the blind and visually impaired on Bowen.

When the Union Steamship Company property came on the market in the early 1960s, Robinson's project began to take shape. The CNIB acquired three acres of waterfront in Deep Bay ..."

Shortly after Bowen Island's municipal status became a reality in 1999, an elevator was installed at the Bowen Island Community School and joined ramps and other inclusion and accommodation initiatives. Beach accesses were opened to the public in the early 2000s, with close attention at Sandy Beach, Bowen Bay and Tunstall Bay to accessibility for wheelchair users and others with limited mobility, including people with children in strollers and older adults.

Seniors Keeping Young (SKY) was founded as registered charity in 1994. SKY is a group of lively Bowen Islanders 55+ years of age who enjoy an active program of social get-togethers, exercise and music programs, field trips, and friendship, with the goal of advocating for and improving physical and mental health and well-being. SKY welcomes people with various disabilities and is committed to offering accessible opportunities to all older adults to participate. An age-friendly report in 2009 (currently Appendix C of the Transportation Plan) identified accessibility challenges and recommendations for addressing barriers encountered by older adults.

During the first 20 years of Bowen Island Municipality, policies, plans and procedures were developed, adopted and often funded, which continue the community's efforts to welcome and include people with accessibility needs. In 2022, the community was ready and willing to elect a fully blind municipal councillor; the first-ever blind elected official anywhere in Canada. In the same year, an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy was adopted by Council.

Accessibility remains an issue as a small rural island, with steep slopes down to most beaches and limited sidewalks. However, Bowen also features accessible natural beauty, low speed limits on roads, a walkable human-scale village with limited vehicle traffic, a small caring community, and other safety and health-related aspects.

Caring Circle/BI Community Health??
Volunteer culture
Library and Med Shed.
Other???

d. *The Accessible BC Act (ABCA)*

The *Accessible BC Act* was passed by the Government of British Columbia in June 2021. This legislation pushed local governments to take action on accessibility by requiring them to implement methods to receive feedback on accessibility from the public, establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), and to develop an accessibility action plan.

e. The BIM Accessibility Advisory Committee

Following the mandate of the *Accessible BC Act*, the Bowen Island Municipality (BIM) created the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC). The BIM invited the community to provide input on accessibility using multiple mechanisms (email, voicemail, text messaging, web form, print form by post or drop-off at the municipal hall). The municipality started with a survey that was circulated in print and online format and it continues to remain open for public input on the municipal website as well as using the other communication channels that were opened. BIM organized a community group accessibility planning session on June 25, 2023 that was widely advertised and open to anyone in the community.

BIM advertised open committee positions through the newspaper, online, and with flyers distributed to residents' mailboxes in Summer 2023. Members of the community with diverse backgrounds, perspectives and abilities were encouraged to come forward to serve on the committee. Volunteers were selected from applicants and the AAC was established and began meeting in October 2023.

The present AAC is a Select Committee of the BIM Council that acts in an advisory capacity to Council, with final decisions in all matters brought before the Committee resting with the Council. The Committee will:

- Assist Bowen Island Municipality and the Bowen Island Public Library to identify barriers to individuals in or interacting with those organizations;
- Advise the Municipality and Public Library on how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization;
- Provide guidance and oversight on the creation of an Accessibility Plan for the Municipality and Public Library;
- Participate in and promote ongoing public feedback opportunities regarding accessibility planning;
- Conduct annual reviews of, and possible updates if appropriate, to the Accessibility Plan;
- Provide advice and make recommendations to Council regarding accessibility planning in Bowen Island Municipality and the Bowen Island Public Library in general; and,
- Pursue any other matters referred to the Committee by Council and report back to the Council expeditiously, as required.

Consistent with the OCP, the accessibility plan is intended to be used not only by Bowen Island Municipality, but also to be considered by local groups, organizations and business, as well as other jurisdictions.

2. Framework for the AAC

a. BIM Accessibility Lens

At its inaugural meeting, the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) recommended a resolution that the guiding principle for Bowen Island Municipal Accessibility Plan be that an accessibility lens be applied to all aspects of life on Bowen Island. This resolution was deemed to be consistent with the BIM *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy* (<https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/245022/>), with equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) being core values for Bowen Island Municipality that are central to our work and are key to actively developing, supporting and promoting these values builds a more resilient community. In effect, the accessibility lens extends the spirit of the EDI policy to an IDEA (inclusion, diversity, inclusion and accessibility) lens.

b. Our Framework

The AAC considered the eight types of standards named in the ABCA that will be developed to remove or prevent barriers. Based on these eight standards, the AAC opted to focus initially on the following six main categories:

1. transportation;
2. the built environment;
3. delivery of services;
4. information and communications;
5. employment (BIM and Library);
6. procurement (advocacy, grant funding for projects).

Consideration of the other standards (health and education) are included to some extent in relation to the six initially selected categories. Regarding procurement, our initial recommendations focus on advocacy and grant funding to promote accessibility recommendations included under the first five topics.

Our approach was to organize data gathered from the public according to the six categories. We also undertook cross-referencing existing BIM documents according to the six main categories. Our intention was to facilitate mapping recommendations based on information gathered from the public to existing municipal work.

Our long-term ambitious goal is for Bowen to become a model for accessible rural island communities.

c. Provincial and National Contexts

The *Accessible BC Act* is the provincial legislation that mandates a local accessibility committee. In addition to the *Accessible BC Act*, the AAC was guided by the *Accessible Canada Act* and other relevant national legislation (*the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, *the Canadian Human Rights Act*, and *Canada's commitments as a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*), as well as other provincial documents (e.g., *BC Housing Accessibility Plan*), *the BC Human Rights Code*, and the *BC Building Code*.

d. Definitions

The following key definitions are based on XXXXXXXX

Accessible Canada Act:

Accessibility: Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities in order to enhance the full and equal participation of all persons, especially persons with disabilities, in society.

Accessibility Standards: The Act operates by bringing accessibility standards into regulation. Accessibility standards are laws that individuals, government, businesses, non-profits, and public sector organizations must follow in order to become more accessible. The accessibility standards contain timelines for the implementation of required measures and help organizations identify, remove, and prevent barriers in order to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

Accommodation: Accommodation is a means of preventing and removing barriers that impede full participation and access based on the [prohibited grounds of discrimination](#). Accommodation is a reactive process that is triggered when an individual identifies their need to be accommodated, for example, a religious or a disability-related accommodation.

Adaptability: Adaptability creates options adapted to the resident occupying the home based on their specific physical needs.

ABCA: The Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA) seeks to ensure that all BC residents have fair and equitable access to programs and services and to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Barrier: A barrier is a circumstance or obstacle that keeps people apart. For people with disabilities, barriers can take many forms: attitudinal, communication, physical, policy, programmatic, social, and transportation. Barriers include anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice—that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

BCBC: The Building Act is the legislative framework governing the construction, renovation and change-of-use of a building. The [BC Building Code \(BCBC\)](#) is a regulation under the Act that establishes detailed technical and administrative requirements as well as minimum standards for building construction. The new 2024 BC Building Code accessibility requirements are based on the 2020 National Building Code with some BC-specific changes to help make new buildings more accessible for all people.

BC Housing Accessibility Plan: The Plan gathers the work to date and existing commitments on accessible housing into one document. This plan will support the development of a more comprehensive strategic framework for accessibility, which will be shared in September 2024.

Disability: A disability is a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities. Disability refers to any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society

e. Accessibility Guidelines and Resources

The AAC identified a number of useful guidelines and resources that should inform future accessibility initiatives to ensure that Bowen Island is aware of and adopts the best available practices. These documents include the following:

Accessibility Services Canada: <https://accessibilitycanada.ca/legislation/aca-accessible-canada-act/>

A Park Accessibility Framework: Making National Parks Accessible to People with Disabilities (including Matrix), <https://engineeringhealth.ca/parks/>

BC Park Accessibility: <https://accessibility.bcparks.ca/>

Dementia-inclusive Planning and Design Guidelines, <https://www.sfu.ca/demscape/knowledge-mobilization/dementia-inclusive-planning-and-design-guidelines.html>

Simon Fraser University, Dementia Inclusive Community Resources, <https://www.sfu.ca/demscape/resources.html>

Dementia-Inclusive Choices for Exercise: <https://dementiaexercise.com/>

Enhancing Physical and Community MoBility in OLDEr Adults with Health Inequities Using CommuNity Co-Design (EMBOLDEN), <https://experts.mcmaster.ca/display/publication2951268>

Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/friendly-rural-remote-communities-a-guide.html>

Standards for Building a Barrier-Free Canada, <https://www.csagroup.org/standards/areas-of-focus/healthcare-and-well-being/standards-for-building-a-barrier-free-canada/>

Communication Disabilities Access Canada, <https://www.cdacanada.com/resources/communication-access-symbol/>

Web Accessibility Guidelines, <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/>

The City of Vancouver's Accessible Event Checklist

The Government of BC's growing list of accessibility guidelines

The Autistic Self Advocacy networks' Autistic Advocacy's Checklist

Disability:IN: Blogpost about benefits of keeping the camera off as accessibility feature

UBC Equity and Inclusion Office's guidelines for hosting inclusive events

Etc....

3. How We Gathered Information about Accessibility on Bowen Island

In 2023, the public was consulted about accessibility on Bowen Island in two main ways: 1. conducting a survey of the community and 2. holding a one-day facilitated community group consultation session. In addition, the AAC conducted a review of existing Bowen Island Municipality documents that provide a context for accessibility planning on Bowen.

a. Survey

Who was invited: All residents of Bowen Island were invited to participate in the survey about accessibility. The survey invitation was distributed by multiple methods, including [note if/how invitations were accessible].

How consultation was conducted: The survey was designed by based on Responses were gathered online or a paper version of the survey could be completed. [note if/how invitations were accessible]. The survey opened on XX and remains open. Data analysis included all submissions received up to XXXX .

Key questions asked: The survey consisted of three main parts.

Part 1 asked two open-ended questions: “What does ‘accessibility’ for Bowen Islanders mean to you personally?” and “What barriers do you experience on Bowen Island?”

Part 2 asked for demographic information on 8 characteristics in response to the question: “Do you, or does someone under your direct care, belong to a group that experiences barriers to accessibility? Check all that apply”, with response choices being indigenous, BPOC (black or person of colour), BGBTQ21A+, low-income individual or family, female-identifying, senior, under-employed, and youth (< 30 years old).

Part 3 asked about disability characteristics using four yes-no options plus an open-ended item where other information could be described. The four yes-no options were:

- Visible long-term disability (examples include but are not limited to: vision impairment; mobility limitations; medical device reliance; etc.);
- Invisible long-term disability (examples include but are not limited to: illness; mental health and/or addictions; neurodiversity; learning and cognition differences; etc.);
- Prefer not to say;
- Neither I nor anyone under my direct care belong to a group that experiences barriers to accessibility.

Who participated: Responses were received from 96 individuals.

Disability Characteristics of Respondents: Overall, about half (n = 47) of the respondents reported one or more disabilities. Just under 1/5 (n = 14) reported having no disabilities. About 1/3 (n = 35) provided no response to the questions about their disability profile. Of the 47 who reported a disability, a wide range of disabilities were reported. Invisible disabilities were reported by about half (n = 23), visible disabilities were reported by about ¼ (n = 12), both invisible and visible disabilities were reported by about ¼ (n=12). The specific types of disabilities that were reported included mobility (n = 6), hearing (n = 4) and vision (n = 1).

b. Community Group Consultation Session

Who was invited: (how advertised, how registered)

How consultation was conducted: (where, when, facilitated by Chris Corrigan and Angie Fleming, how accessibility was provided, lunch provided, etc.)

Key questions asked: There were three main topics: 1. challenges to accessibility, 2. accessibility successes, and 3. suggested plans for action.

Who participated: (how many, representation of disabilities, age groups, island neighbourhoods)

c. Review of Existing BIM Documents

The committee and staff reviewed existing BIM documents to determine the starting point for the work of the committee. Table 1 lists the title, features, link to source, and status with dates and funding for all relevant bylaws, approved plans, projects, policies, procedures and grant funding approved by Bowen Island Municipality which in any way address accessibility within the community.

First, each document listed in Table 1 was searched using the Control-F function for terms “access” (which also finds “accessibility”), mobility, and ability (which also finds “disability”) in order to locate relevant areas of the text. A further search added the terms: beaches, parks, staff training, community attitudes, employees, volunteers, stores, businesses, and education. Any parts of the text discussing topics related to accessibility which in some way promoted an initiative, facility, infrastructure, or service related to accessibility were extracted.

A large number of BIM documents refer to accessibility and very few documents had no relevance to or mention of accessibility. These foundational documents pertaining to accessibility provide directions for the municipality, developers, and the community. They demonstrate the intentions and mandates already in place. Anticipating that accessibility projects and actions that can be shown to connect with these foundations will be most likely to be successful, the results of the search of BIM documents were organized to show which documents contained existing accessibility recommendations according to the topic categories of our framework by which the recommendations of the AAC were organized.

Table 1: BIM Documents Related to Accessibility

Title	Features	Link to Source	Status	Dates	Funding
Bylaws					
Official Community Plan (OCP)	Like the Constitution of Bowen. Public input welcome soon. (Many relevant excerpts provided earlier by planner Drew Bakken)	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/property-development/land-use-planning/#OCP	In place, review period underway; for developers, municipal planners and the community	2010 - ongoing	Yes, for review
Land Use Bylaw (LUB)(Zoning)	Includes parking for persons with disabilities; and describes the permitted uses all of properties, follows OCP.	Use search terms "training" and "disabilities" in https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/190971/	In place; for developers, municipal planners, and the community	1972 - ongoing	No
Snug Cove Design Guidelines (Schedule E of LUB)	Human-scaled design, sidewalks, curb cuts, pedestrians to be prioritized, community-oriented, benches, etc.	Current version and Feb 2024 draft in ADP agenda: https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/310637/	In place, review period underway	2006 - ongoing	No
Zoning of former CNIB property	Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities is the only principle use permitted	Use search terms "training" and "disabilities" in https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/190971/	In place; for developers, planners, community	1972 - ongoing	No
Approved Plans					
Transportation Plan	Bus transit, multi-use pathway, ferry, many other aspects and projects	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/our-community/transportation/transportation-plan/ and https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/our-community/transportation/	Underway	2018 - 2038	Yes, annually, including grants
Active Transportation Plan	Identifies areas for improvement and types of fixes to make active transportation more accessible	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/296841/	Pending approval	N/A	
Age Friendly Community Project Report to Council (Appendix C to Transportation Plan)	Analyzes the accessibility of the island to seniors and those with disabilities	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/168886/	In place	2009	

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Community Economic Development Plan	Top-down analysis of all sectors of island's economy, and how to improve	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/265659/	In place	2021-ongoing	
Strategic Plan	Establishes Council's goals for the community over their term	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/286268/	In Place	2023-2026	
Strategic Plan 2024 update	An updated look at the progress on Council's strategic plan	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/309810/	In place	2024	
Community Energy and Emissions Plan	Helps residents/businesses reduce energy, save \$ and reduce greenhouse gases	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/255209/	In place	2021-ongoing	
Cultural Master Plan	Advance arts and culture on BI while creating an attractive and liveable community	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/148336/	In place, for BIM	2017-2027	
Community Recreation Plan		https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/134546/	In place, for BIM	2017-2027	
Parks Plan	Improvements to beaches, benches, trail bridges, boardwalks; new pit toilet at Grafton Lake in 2024	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks/parks-plan/	Underway	2018 - 2028	Yes, annually, including grants
Community Childcare Plan 2020	Assesses the current and future stock of childcare services on the island	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/filepro/document/215188/022420%20FINAL%20Child%20Care%20Planning%20Grant%20to%20Council_FINAL-compressed.pdf	In place, for BIM and Union of BC Municipalities	2020-ongoing	
Housing Needs Report	Assesses the current and future stock of housing	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/219608/	In place	2020	
Projects					
Multi-Use Pathway	All ages and abilities (AAA), cross-island	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/our-government/capital-projects/multi-use-path-project/	Underway	2017 - annual	Yes, including grants
Community Centre	Ramps, highly-filtered air, sound systems, other accessibility features	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/our-government/capital-projects/community-centre-project-2/	Underway	Opens 2024	Yes, including grants, donations
Transit on Demand	Pilot project, was funded by TransLink	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/our-community/transportation/transit-on-demand/	Potential	2019	No
Bowen Lift	Ride share/hitch hiking, existing signs on roads and ferry, sanctioned by BIM	http://bowenlift.com/about;https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/lift-program-bowen-island-hitchhiking	Potential	2010 - est. 2014	No

Policies					
Active Design Guidelines Policy	All ages and abilities, universal design, complete/shared roads, more	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/24234/?preview=209880	In place; for developers, planners, community	2019 - ongoing	No
Snug Cove Medical Assured Loading Policy	Ensures those with health issues are guaranteed on the ferry	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/309488/	In place	2024	
Communicating with the Public Policy	Appropriate communication for staff interacting with public	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/69793/	In place	2007-ongoing	
Public Participation Policy	Includes inclusive and accessible	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/24234/?preview=172285	In place; for BIM	2018 - ongoing	No
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	Includes employment, volunteers, training	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/24234/?preview=245022	In place; for BIM	2021 - ongoing	No
Bench Policy	These are commemorative benches	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/301788/?preview=301789	In place	2024 - ongoing	Yes, including donations
Affordable Housing Policy	Encourages provision of affordable housing units at rezoning stage	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/18500/	In place	2008, amended 2024	
Traffic Calming Policy	Guidelines on slowing traffic to increase pedestrian/cyclist safety	https://bowenisland.civicweb.net/document/235035/	In place	2020	
Procedures					
Staff /olunteer training, development	Especially Recreation Department	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/parks-recreation-culture/	Underway	ongoing	Yes
Accessibility Advisory Committee Plan	Upcoming Plan, and potential future referral role like ADP?	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/our-government/committees/accessibility-advisory-committee/	Underway	2023 - ongoing	No
Grants					
Community Resiliency Grants	Includes assist vulnerable neighbours	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/our-community/grants-for-the-community/partnership-grants/	Underway	Ongoing	Yes
Neighbourhood Small Grants	For small-scale projects that reduce social isolation	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/our-community/grants-for-the-community/partnership-grants/	Underway	Ongoing	Yes
Beach access through logs	Railing added down to Bowen Bay Beach recently	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/parks-recreation-culture/beaches/	Underway	Each spring	Parks and Environment Dept.

4. Findings

a. Survey

There were 93 of the 96 survey respondents who completed the open-ended survey question on barriers. The main responses to the two open-ended questions concerned five main categories of barriers. Item numbers refer to Appendix A where all responses are listed showing the five main categories of barriers that people reported experiencing on Bowen Island.

There were 69 people who reported experiencing at least one barrier. Of these 69, 41 identified one category of barrier, 16 identified two categories, 6 identified three categories, 3 identified four categories, and 3 identified five categories. The remaining 18 respondents (items #78-95) indicated that they had not experienced any barriers and 8 respondents (items #70-77) reported financial or discrimination issues not specifically related to accessibility for people living with disabilities. Notably, some of the respondents who did not experience barriers commented that they were concerned about their own future disabilities and concerns were also expressed about accessibility for others in the community, including children and the growing number of older adults.

- Transportation: Accessibility issues related to transportation were raised by about 2/3 (n=51) of the respondents. The main transportation accessibility issues concerned walkways (9), lack of transit on Bowen (13), and ferry access (19).
- Recreation facilities: Lack of recreational facilities or difficulty accessing them was raised by over 1/5 (n=17) of the respondents.
- Beach access: Accessible beach or trail access was raised by over 1/5 (n=16) of respondents.
- Stores/buildings: Accessibility at stores or other buildings was raised by about 1/5 (n=15) of the respondents.
- Meetings: Accessibility at meetings was raised by 15% (n=11) of the respondents, with about half (n=5; items #58-62) noting problems with acoustics or hearing.

b. In-person Group Consultation Session

The group consultation session was organized in three main topics: 1. challenges to accessibility, 2. accessibility successes, and 3. suggested plans for action. The comments contributed during the session are summarized below. See Appendix B for a detailed list of contributions.

Part 1: Challenges

Numerous challenges were identified. They fell into the following broad categories: limitations of island life, transportation, outdoor spaces and indoor spaces.

Island Life

Re-location on/off island: Challenges for new arrivals to Bowen affected how easy it was for them to integrate into the community (*“Barrier – when first moved to Bowen really difficult to meet people and make friends. Ferry a barrier to people visiting. Started with SKY and improved.”*). There were also challenges that compelled long-time residents to leave the island (*“People forced to leave island when disability barriers too great”*). Visitors may also not have accessible communication (*“The visitor list of events on Bowen is on whiteboard and not everyone can read it.”*)

Services/facilities on Bowen: For those living on Bowen with disabilities, travel to the mainland can be challenging and costly (*“Cost to travel to mainland for activities (reservations if timing is critical)”*). Needs were identified for programs for teenagers (*“More teenager programs on Bowen”*), for sports (*“Sports facilities for people with disabilities (e.g., sailing)”*), and for facilities for older adults (*“Physical space for seniors. (Not Bowen Court, something like West Van Seniors’ Activity Centre)”*); *“Snug Cove House put on hold, a great disappointment. Really needed”*). Need for more financial and social support was reported (*“While some people can afford to make accommodations, many do not have the finances or family support to do so”*).

Inclusion: Accessibility to enable participation in community activities can be a challenge (*“Participating in community events depends entirely on physical access being REALLY easy. Otherwise just stay at home Isolating”*), including participation on committees (*“Representation/participation in municipality (e.g., committee, council meetings)”*), and it requires ongoing adaptations (*“Awareness of needs of disabilities especially invisible disabilities or fluctuating needs”*).

Transportation

Public Transportation: Many challenges concerned lack of accessible transportation, especially for those who do not drive (*“While still able to drive, many things still possible. Worry about when we can no longer drive and a big loss of independence”*; *“Dementia – no longer able to drive so rides bike but no home care”*) and given that existing options are not accessible for all (*“Transit bus isn’t necessarily helpful for people who can’t make it up the steps, need a walker or wheelchair with them etc.”*) compared to options available on the mainland (*“Accessible transportation- Handi-dart bus for multiple disabilities”*). There was much interest in *“an accessible taxi on the island, also shuttle into town for people and to pick-up ordered goods”*.

Parking: Those who drive identified challenges in parking (*“Handicapped parking: access to doors in and out of vehicle”; “Need close parking to get places”*).

Ferry: Many challenges were identified about getting to/from the ferry (*“The corner between the mural wall at the ferry and the drop off at bus stop is a hard crosswalk to navigate. No curb-cut, no tactile indicators”*) and on the ferry (*“Ferry – difficult wheelchair on elevator because of enclosure on main deck (no turning space)”*; *“Ferry – too hard to navigate a walker between lines and parked cars on the deck, so always stuck in the car!”*; *“BC ferries – a washroom, if possible, on car deck level”*).

Walkways and Roads: There were also challenges using walkways and roads (*“Narrow roads a problem for pedestrians, scooters, bicyclist, horses, strollers and speed”*; *“Lack of safe sidewalks and road shoulders often walking in the road.”*; *“Road direction signs – print way too small! Must almost stop to read direction to go.”*)

Outdoor Spaces

Beaches: There are challenges accessing beaches for residents and visitors with disabilities (*“Access to beaches is hard without full mobility. Steep paths, gravel, logs across the path. The dilemma is we don’t want it all paved.”*)

Trails: Challenges concerning accessibility to trails were identified (*“Access points to forest trails could be better marked with signs. Put our trails on apps.”*)

Patios: More accessible outdoor meeting/business spaces were suggested (*“Open areas were good during the pandemic, they were helpful for concerns regarding infection”*; *“Outdoor patios support accessibility cheering, physical, Strollers.”*)

Indoor Spaces

Hearing Accessibility: Challenges due to poor acoustics were reported for many buildings used by the public (*“New buildings with poor acoustics why? -Pub - Library – Cates Hill Chapel”*; *“Places with poor acoustics: Bowen Lodge, Cates Hill Chapel, Library Annex, Collins Hall, BICs Auditorium, The Legion”*). Furthermore, challenges hearing at BIM Council meetings in-person or online were identified (*“Barrier watching council meetings on YouTube with difficulties to hear.”*; *“People who need to mouth read when have masks on. -Should have captions on zoom meetings.”*; *“Microphone in council too small and cannot hear in room or on zoom.”*)

Vision Accessibility: Challenges in vision accessibility were reported as problems for shopping (*“Finding products in grocery stores... Using a bar code reader takes time. Small Stores cannot always have extra staff to help. It’s easier to do big shopping online.”*) and for financial transactions (*“Debit machines with flat/touch screen are not accessible the way buttons are.”*)

Mobility Accessibility: Lack of or poorly designed washrooms are challenges in public places and businesses (*“Library – No coat hooks in washroom.”*; *“Where can we eat in the cove that has accessible washrooms?”*). Elevator access (*“BICs after hours elevators locked and no access to 2nd floor, no signage to alternate access”*) and steps with railings were identified as challenges (*“steps from Tir Na Nog have no railings”*).

Part 2: Successes

Numerous successes were identified. The main categories were a positive social environment that minimizes stigma and offers social support. There were many examples of improvements in accessibility already achieved on Bowen, including initiatives for/by those who are Blind/Deafblind and for seniors, and opportunities facilitated by many activities, facilities, businesses and public services. Other considerations were accessibility to enable benefit of being in nature and good safety. Specific examples of accessibility and potential further improvement were also noted.

Social Environment

Sense of Community: There was a strong feeling that a positive sense of community was a key success factor for accessibility on Bowen (*"Based on 24 years of experience on Bowen, no other community has such awareness of accessibility issues as here. It's a different world for blind people off the island."*; *"People must have that safe/safety net."*; *"Small community means recognize and know more people."*; *"Community tuned into individual needs."*; *"Bowen-quiet, friendly, supportive"*; *"Being on an island means we need to be more self-reliant."*)

Stigma and Social Support: People felt that stigma was less and social support was greater on Bowen than elsewhere (*"Less stigma on Bowen than on mainland – more likely to be recognized + helped"*; *"People are helpful when they see a disability"*; *"People are very respectful I- they ask if they can help and actually listen."*) These comments recognized the importance of positive and respectful community attitudes (*"Incredible volunteerisms must pitch in and help improve simple accessibility issues e.g., widen existing ramps etc. Rise together as a community; Informal supports when people need help. (e.g., driving, meals)"*; *"Drivers are very aware or people especially in the cove with accessibility issues"*; *"Bowen Islanders look out for each other."*)

Blind and Deafblind: Community support and awareness of accessibility for Blind and Deafblind people was highlighted (*"Having CDB on Bowen helps knowledge respect/ speed/ inclusive small-scale program."*; *"Our community was willing and ready to elect a fully blind 1st ever elected official, anywhere in Canada. A milestone for Bowen and initiative of council."*).

Aging: Community support and awareness of the importance of accessibility for older adults was also highlighted (*"Seniors on Council"*; *"Community members care and want to help so people can age in peace."*; *"Intergenerational activities are good."*).

Activities: Comments recognized many excellent accessible opportunities for participation in a range of activities on Bowen (*"Lots of clubs, organizations, committees to join."*; *"Legion dinners and lunches"*; *"Bowen Lodge is a meeting place to promote disability learning."*; *"Amenities – galleries, shops, services, cafes – we can stay on Bowen. Genuine openness to improving accessibility."*; *"The golf course is great for activity, socialization, recreation."*).

Facilities/Businesses/Services: Comments recognized excellent facilities, businesses, and services that were important for accessibility (*"Library 'med shed' helps transitions."*; *"Pharmacy support; Rudy potato support."*; *"Kindness and feeling of community. Nancy [at the General Store] takes care of everyone."*; *"Service providers (e.g., fire, bus, stores, RCMP, post office etc.) know people and adapt well to do what is best."*; *"Emergency support is strong- despite aspects of isolation & privilege."*)

Nature

Comments reflected an important connection between positive social attitudes and accessibility to enable people to enjoy nature (*"Bowen, with its nature and special people providers a "Special community"; "Nature: forest bathing, restorative well-being."; "Nature is positive. Positive attitudes are important."*). Specific comments were made about parks and trails (*"Crippen Park access to meadow +wetlands excellent."; "Trails in nature a huge positive."*), as well as beaches (*"Railings down to bench @ Bowen Bay."; "Ocean Swimming for most of the year good."*)

Safety

Safety was considered to be an essential benefit of good accessibility whether in nature or in the village (*"Safer to get around – move independence; e.g., power wheelchair on pavement."; "Level trails/routes with little traffic. Cul de sacs are good for level access."; "One great advantage of Bowen's geography is that we have many small cul de sacs, where there isn't lots of fast traffic and noise. Quiet roads are great."; "Grouping of the coves amenities is helpful since accessed the cove is quite quiet and navigable especially outside in the summer."*)

Examples of Accessibility

Existing examples of accessibility were identified, including comments about accessibility for facilities and parking in Snug Cove, pathways and trails outside of Snug Cove, and virtual options for accessibility. There were also comments about the need for more supports to address barriers in accessing health services on Bowen.

Snug Cove: In Snug Cove there were examples of accessibility for specific facilities, including the art gallery (*"Art galleries all free and accessible."*), library (*"Library's new parking lot – good flat safe access to the library"*), schools (*"Lots of different kinds of schools for different kinds of student's abilities."*) There were related comments about accessibility in terms of travel to and parking at facilities (*"New wheelchair paving wide enough for wheelchair access (@library, @ school, need more"; "Handicap parking in snug cove is good."; "The roundabout is pretty good – curbs and sidewalks on one side (would be better to have the sidewalk continue along Cardena)"*).

Multi-use Pathway (MUP): Respondents commented on the present and future needs for accessibility for users of the MUP and other trails (*"Multi-use path is great = creates safe access"; "MUP very accessible but not everywhere."; "Trails-Many are accessible. Can access trails short walk from the ferry. No car needed!"*)

Virtual Options: The potential of virtual options for accessibility were noted (*"Zoom meetings of council make all info accessible (even if boring)"*).

Services: People commented on the importance of helping people to access medical and other supports (*"Access to medical and other support services on – island."; "Caring Circle is helping residents to access supports."; "Caring circle/Snug Cove House 'Hubs' website is great on resources BUT potential for more collaboration and publication of this great resource."; "Good supports if you can find it. More info on 'Better at Home'"; "SKY + Snug Cove House have incredible volunteers to advocate for seniors who want to work hard to achieve a gathering place and to get people to it."*)

Potential for Improvement

Potential areas for improvement spanned the categories of transportation, the built environment, housing, and information/communication.

Transportation: Improvements were suggested for more accessible transportation options (*"There is great potential for taxi/transportation accessibility"; "Possibility for exploring accessible transportation and needs of "invisible" seniors are high. More discussions and we can change the narrative hopefully."*),

Built Environment: Suggestions included seeking funding to make public built environments more accessible (*"Grants to add accommodations are helpful i.e. library annex"*),

Housing: It was suggested that accessible housing could be improved by/for citizens (*"Our community here is so willing to make small adjustments at their own cost and expenses. Make houses more accessible."*).

Information/Communication: Potential improvements included communicating more information about accessibility, especially to new residents (*"The welcome wagon used to be great. Let's bring it back. Let's welcome new seniors coming to live on Bowen. COVID put a spanner in the works. What happened to Maurine Nicholson Newcomers guide."*).

Part 3: Suggested Actions

The suggested action plan included principles and items in the five main areas of transportation, built environment (indoor and outdoor spaces), services and governance, information and communication, and employment.

Principles

1. Community as a verb
 - Bowen is a cradle community + welcoming and a safe space
 - Registry of where those with disabilities live- including seniors!
 - Support for caregivers and their supports
 - Goal – Less + Less need to go off-island
2. Micro-neighbourhoods, social cohesion, support this.
 - Opportunities for social connection within the community (raises awareness of how to connect with people with emotional, cognitive, physical barriers)
 - Council should ask various “communities” how they would get to the cove! Include seniors.
 - “NERP” Neighborhood, accessibility response plan
 - NERP – identification of special needs / resources updated regularly.
3. More trails needed made “all encompassing.”
 - With more density and tourists, need more trails for walking and scooters
4. Good emergency services

Main Issues

1. Transportation and Ferry

- Possibilities and local creativity about transportation alternatives.
 - Need shuttle busses “On demand” -was this the need 2 years ago?
 - Where are bussed? Seniors also.
 - Transportation – handy Dart on demand would be excellent.
 - Not every group needs a bus, one bus could serve many different group interests/visits. E.g., shared vehicle transportation off- and on-island visits.
 - Pooling resources to address shared common needs.
 - Car dependency
- Liaison with BC ferries, need better access between cars for walkers/wheelchairs.
 - Determine priority access to ferry.
 - Cost/accessibility to get onto ferry + back.
 - More info re: medical ferry waiting spot.
 - Pedestrian access to ferry on North side and crosswalks
- Better communication on availability of wheelchairs and how to secure them.
 - Drivers need to be aware of scooter users. Difficult when following conventional “rules of the road” – awareness and consistency of rules.
 - Signs re access; e.g., “Wheelchair accessible for 6pm – test in real time
 - Artisan square could have another Handicapped parking spot.

2. Built Environment

A. *Indoor Spaces*

- Accessible community engagement
 - Community Centre – physical space for seniors
 - Senior's centre -designated spaces for board meeting/ activities, shared with other interest groups.
- Mic for each councillor – also see the delegations.
 - Environmental accessibility – does space/sound encourage or discourage community participation? E.g. in council meetings, sound in the room or audibility of the sound recording.
 Washrooms
- Cross-over between the environmental and physical accessibility
 - Library hooks
 - Grab bars in Community “owned” spaces/venues.
 - Natural light + design is inviting.

B. *Outdoor spaces*

- Trails and Beaches access
 - Some accessible nature and beaches
 - Handrail at other beaches (both sides) other than Bowen Bay.
 - Accessibility to Nature/Parks – more info on Apps/technology
 - Update local mapping.
 - Trails are more than recreational, practical but safety is important.
 Fire fire fire!
- “Multi-Use Paths” including cross-island pathway.
 - E Bike Safety for pedestrians on paths vs roads
 - Planning for those with disabilities re. emergencies.

3. Services (Policy Making, Inclusion, Governance)

- BIM + Bowen Community be leaders in inclusion, diversity + accessibility in terms of vision, planning, operations.
 - Clear definition of “accessibility” & disability as broad + inclusive as suitable for Bowen (e.g. visible invisible disabilities)
 - Invisible disabilities
- Synergies – connecting the work already happening in many different non-profit groups on Bowen.
 - Assessment of ecosystem (key actors map) that identifies all the organizations addressing these needs and identifies gaps and opportunities for collaboration. E.g., Community police
 - Cove is accessible, where else?
- Accessibility standards should be referenced by every other committee. Eg. design standards. – easier than retrofit

- Accessibility committee- including people with accessibility issues in decision making, assuring people on committee/ in community have a say in planning for instance.
- Access to public meeting & information -monthly audios, zoom, communications, vision.

4. Information and Communication

- Making newcomers to Bowen (newcomer's guide) and visitors to Bowen know that we as a community value accessibility issue on Bowen and have high expectation of behaviour and we have accommodations to offer
 - Welcoming – post office key is good opening
 - multiple ways of accessing
 - pleg of info/websites/national standards.
 - Good supports if you can find it
 - Build awareness & understanding of various experiences/accessibility.
 - Less Stigma

Technology Solutions

- Identification/scorecard for accessibility
 - Accessibility in Comm's + tourists
 - Communication – add an element in public notices re: accessibility eg. Hearth is wheelchair accessible. Accessibility info on websites
 - Wi-Fi
- Resource hub for info and events.

5. Employment

- Information!
 - “Employer Circles” Eg. a sort of support group for employers with an accessibility experienced person in the room to help businesses come together.
 - “Untapped resources” leading to causing labour shortages and affordable housing pressures and pressures for people having to leave the island for work. Post “bites” in the recording for particular discussions for interested listeners.
 - Accessible employment and connecting local employers with workers seeking accommodations.
- Learn common solutions to meet mutual needs.
 - Acoustics (new building)
 - Microphones, speakers captions + Zoom
 - Build Ramps for accessible employees etc.

a. Review of Existing BIM Documents

The review of existing BIM documents (Table 1) revealed that most of the topics identified in the survey and in the public consultation session were already recommended in existing documents. Below the documents and associated recommendations are organized according to the main topics of concern identified by the AAC based on consultations with the public. This cross-listing of topics, documents and recommendations is expected to facilitate the future work of staff in putting an accessibility lens on ongoing updates to the existing documents. See Appendix C for list of documents and details related to accessibility.

OCP: There are twenty objectives or policies identified in the Official Community Plan which pertain to accessibility. These objectives/policies have a focus on concentrating housing and infrastructure related to accessibility in the Snug Cove area, in order to link these with access to amenities and support services that residents need. Varying housing forms and sizes of units are recommended, as well as a focus on rentals, in order to increase housing availability for those with accessibility needs. These objectives also identify accessibility initiatives on local and provincial levels, such as the Age Friendly Community Project.

1. Transportation

Documents included relevant accessibility recommendations regarding paths, roads, responses to weather conditions, transportation options on island, the ferry, and parking.

Topic	Document Name	Date	Recommendation
<i>Paths/Walkways</i>			
	Community Economic Dev Plan	Report 2021	Low-cost lighting Widen path to Artisan Square
	Community Energy and Emissions	Plan 2021	Build more safe paths
	Active Transportation Plan	Plan 2023	Prioritize walking/rolling Expand ped/bicycle network Pathway lighting
	<i>Sidewalks in Snug Cove</i>		
	Active Transportation Plan	Plan 2023	Continuous sidewalks Expand network in the Cove
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Wide enough for scooters etc Smooth surface, no slopes No obstacles i.e., Poles Curb cuts (not diagonal) Crosswalks Prioritize Senior Ln/Miller Rd

Topic	Document Name	Date	Recommendation
Roads	Traffic Calming Policy	Policy 2020	Pedestrian crossings Curb extension Speed tables Raised intersections
	Active Design Guidelines	Policy 2019	Multimodal access Universal accessibility
	Active Transportation Plan	Plan 2023	Marking crossings Raising crossings Flashing beacons
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Traffic calming Speed limit enforcement

Topic	Document Name	Date	Recommendation
Weather	Active Transportation Plan	Plan 2023	Encourages paving as a weather-resistant surface
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Snow removal on sidewalks Volunteers to shovel for seniors Essential services available in severe weather Phone tree in snow storms

Topic	Document Name	Date	Recommendation
Transit options (taxi, bus)	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Accessible transit, affordable Research co-op taxi models On-call volunteer drivers Smaller bus for all areas Weekly bus to mainland Explore Handidart for future Covered bus shelters
	Strategic Plan	Plan 2024	On-demand bus service More water taxi services Add electric passenger ferry
	Community Energy and Emissions	Plan 2021	Free transit days Accessible Public Transit Expand bicycle network
	Cultural Master Plan	2017-2027	Shuttle buses to events
	Affordable Housing Policy	Policy 2008	Co-op car arrangement
	Transportation Plan	2018-2038	School-transit partnership Park & ride incentives Electric vehicle infrastructure Real-time transit tracking Coordinated schedules
	Active Transportation Plan	Plan 2023	Multi-modal integration
	Community Economic Dev Plan	Report 2021	Shuttles to local events

Topic	Document Name	Date	Recommendation
Ferry	MAL Strategic Plan	Policy 2024 Plan 2024	not specifically accessibility Electric passenger ferry Improved services
	Cultural Master Plan	2017-2027	Late-night ferry or water taxi
	Transportation Plan	2018-2038	Alternative ferries Accessible ramp
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Improve access to elevator Improve dropoff/pickup area Improve sidewalk access

Topic	Document Name	Date	Recommendation
Parking	Land Use Bylaw	Bylaw 2002	Size of disabled parking stall Disabled parking for new developments
	Active Design Guidelines	Policy 2019	Flexible garage space Downplay parking
	Official Community Plan	Plan 2010	Universal parking Accessible parking spaces
	Transportation Plan	2018-2038	Bike and scooter parking Commuter parking
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Disabled parking available & identified, more near ferry Curb cuts, no obstacles

2. Built Environment

Documents included relevant accessibility recommendations regarding beaches, municipal/public buildings (e.g., BIRD/KKK), housing and parks.

Topic	Document Name	Date	Accessibility Recommendation
Beaches	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/parks-recreation-culture/beaches/		
	Active Transportation Plan	Plan 2023	Increase access via stairs and trail/MUP connections
	Active Design Guidelines	Policy 2019	Connect them to AT network Allocate space for rec
	Parks Plan	Plan '18-28	Improve coastal access points Improve maintenance Clear signage installed Respect FN heritage Stewardship programs Extend no-dog season Non-motor boat launches

Topic	Document Name	Date	Accessibility Recommendation
<i>Municipal/Public Buildings (BIRD/KKK)</i>			
	Community Centre	Policy 2024	Physical Environment Technologies Training
	Community Recreation Plan	2017-2027	Barriers to programs Engage non-rec users Collaboration between groups Shared community initiatives Review classes and programs Youth programming Senior programming Programs for life skills Role of muni in engaging people
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Physically Accessible Seniors meeting space in new community centre Include volunteer information centre in Community Centre Library: large print section Audiobooks/devices available Library book pickup/delivery Future mobile library Hearing system for muni hall
	Official Community Plan	Plan 2010	Age Friendly Community Project
	Community Childcare Plan 2020	Plan 2020	Infant/toddler wing at BCC Facility for after-school club New before-school program Facility for before-school Create childcare space Weight room should include age appropriate machines (55+)
	Community Economic Dev Plan	Report 2021	Co-working office space Create new rec facilities for fitness and therapeutic uses Partner with schools to offer health care placement program Expand no-cost computer access for low-income residents Add private boarding school Provide community gardens Establish community kitchen to feed low-income families

Housing

Housing Needs Report	Policy 2020	Growth in 65+ population Address affordability Non-market stock Increase rental stock
Snug Cove Design Guidelines	Guide 2002	Pedestrian precedence Pedestrian connections
Active Design Guidelines	Policy 2019	Accessible exteriors Age-friendly interiors
Community Economic Dev Plan	Report 2021	Re-purpose underused bldgs. Affordable housing strategy Price-controlled rentals Zoning for a farm village Allow a boutique inn (10 rooms) Increase options for BI Lodge Tiny homes or DSS for visitors Allow high-end hostel Allow multi-day inns/cottages Allow 1 or 2 campgrounds
Affordable Housing Policy	Policy 2008	15% of GFA as affordable Walking distance amenities Compact, accessible Mix of housing types
Official Community Plan	Plan 2010	Ask VCH to build assisted living & multi-care facilities in Snug Cove Support Abbeyfield House Free land for non-profit housing Housing Reserve Fund Housing Trust Fund Direct dev to Snug Cove Special Needs Housing
Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Granny flat for existing lots Park model homes Small housing clusters Add units to Bowen Court Add units to Abbeyfield Homes near amenities/transport Universal Design - new buildings. Affordable housing accessibility Include communal spaces Publicize list of local handymen On-island respite for caregivers Increase supportive housing Increase assistive living
Strategic Plan	Plan 2024	Cluster zoning pilot project Provincial short-term rental regs Plan for Lot 1 Community Lands Establish community-owned housing organization Use Housing Accelerator Fund

Topic	Document Name	Date	Accessibility Recommendation
Parks	Parks Plan	Plan '18-28	Multi-gen gather space More toilets/facilities Universally accessible parks Replace aging stairs New skate park
	Community Economic Dev Plan	Report 2021	New skate park
	https://bowenislandmunicipality.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks/		
	Active Transportation Plan	Plan 2023	Increase parks connections
	Active Design Guidelines	Policy 2019	Increase connections Allocate space for recreation

3. Service Delivery and Governance

Documents included relevant accessibility recommendations regarding internet, meetings, and staff training.

Topic	Document Name	Date	Accessibility Recommendation
Internet	Community Economic Dev Plan	Report 2021	Create community-owned ISP BIM-owned broadband service
Meetings	Public Participation Policy	Policy 2018	Must be 'accessible'
Staff Training	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Policy 2021	Remove barriers to equality

4. Information & Communication

Documents included relevant accessibility recommendations regarding website and print documents, educational opportunities for staff, meetings, and staff training, and community attitudes.

Topic	Document Name	Date	Accessibility Recommendation
Website and Print Documents	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Age-friendly info and comm. Large print information Hearing devices at public mtgs Make an Info telephone tree
	Communicating with Public	Policy 2007	Non-discriminatory content Must be 'accessible'

Topic	Document Name	Date	Accessibility Recommendation
Educational Opportunities (staff/public)			
	Community Childcare Plan	Plan 2020	Educate on facility needs More 55+ programs Leaders in training program
	Parks Plan	Plan 2018-28	Community gardens
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Open elder college Evening classes/programs Youth teach seniors computers
	Cultural Master Plan	2017-2027	Virtual heritage walk

Topic	Document Name	Date	Accessibility Recommendation
Community Attitudes			
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Councillor with Seniors portfolio Elders Advisory Council to BIM Senior's advocate Consultation method to seniors Provide transit to all public mtgs
	Community Energy and Emissions	Plan 2021	E-bikes & e-scooters events Bike to Work Week Education event for AAA routes

5. Employment - BIM/Library

Documents included relevant accessibility recommendations regarding employees and also  volunteers.

Topic	Document Name	Date	Accessibility Recommendation
Employees			
	Community Energy and Emissions	Plan 2021	Staff time to promote AT
	Active Design		
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Promote part-time work
Volunteers			
	Strategic Plan	Plan '23-26	Start Accessibility Committee
	Community Recreation Plan	2017-2027	Leaders in Training program
	Official Community Plan	Plan 2010	Opportunities for the elderly
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	Odd jobs for older adults: BICS kids get community service cred Develop mentorship program Visitor program for shut-ins Annual volunteer recognition
	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Policy 2021	EDI guide public interactions
	Community Recreation Plan	2017-2027	Database volunteer

6. Advocacy

Documents included relevant accessibility recommendations regarding advocacy with stores and business on Bowen, partnerships with Bowen Island Community School (BICS), and small grants that could support accessibility needs. Future grants could also be pursued from provincial and federal supports for accessibility initiatives, as well as for research on accessibility.

Topic	Document Name	Date	Accessibility Recommendation
Stores/Businesses			
	Age Friendly Community Report	Report 2009	More disabled parking Ground floor public washrooms Universal design standards Large print signage Directional signage Mobility chair parking Drop off/pickup services
Bowen Island Community School (BICS)			
	Transportation Plan	2018-2038	School Active Trans Plan
	Parks Plan	Plan '18-28	Upgrade artificial turf field Add multi-use sports court
Grants/Research			
	Community Resiliency Grants	2023-24	Assist vulnerable neighbours
	Neighbourhood Small Grants	023-24	Reduce social isolation

7. Our 3 Year Plan

Many existing BIM by-laws, guidelines, plans and policies (identified in Table 1) lay out accessibility actions and priorities. BIM will continue to pursue these to improve accessibility by mitigating and removing barriers.

BIM will be mindful of people with a diverse range of disabilities and abilities and will continue to aim to be a model accessible community. Continuous improvement is a do-able goal.

Action Plan items were identified based on information gathered from the public across surveys and the focus group session. Other opportunities may exist and are to be pursued as and when opportunities present themselves through ongoing inputs and monitoring.

Transportation

Transportation was identified as the major accessibility issue facing Bowen Islanders. Concerns about buses, paths, the ferry, and car-dependency, generated the most comments as to challenges and barriers.

BIM recognizes that transportation is a network and that a barrier in one part of the network may make the rest of it inaccessible. One small obstacle along a path or an unmanageable section may cut access to the rest of the path.

Public Transit:

BIM will continue to lobby TransLink for an on-demand wheelchair accessible bus to enable Bowen Islanders of varying physical capabilities to move about the island. Transit should be available within a half mile to every area on Bowen where road access exists. In lieu of on-demand access, bus stops should be easily identifiable each kilometer.

Parking:

For those who drive, more parking, including handicap parking needs to be provided at destinations to minimize walking, especially on slopes.

Roads:

Priority should be given to clearing fallen branches from roads during and after snowfall to have access for emergency vehicles and residents.

Pathways

- BIM will continue building the Multi-use Pathway to be accessible to all.
- BIM acknowledges that sidewalks/pathways should use principles of universal design to make safe passage ways in all weather conditions with low skid materials.
- Pathways will be regularly maintained so as to remove obstacles, minimize tripping hazards, brush cut back so as to not intrude into areas of travel.
- Where possible BIM will clear space for pedestrians on the verge of roads.
- Developers are encouraged to clear space on at least one side of new roads sufficiently wide as to allow passage for a wheelchair and a pedestrian at the side, with a surface suitable for pedestrians, cycles, wheelchairs and scooters.

Ferry

BIM, through the Ferry Advisory Committee, will work with BC Ferries on accessibility issues

- to identify, mitigate and remove barriers for travelers
- for assisted loading for people with disabilities.

BIM will lobby BC Ferries to pay for passenger-only transport with accessible boarding, to reduce congestion and travel time for residents.

Built Environment

BIM is resolved to make staff available to consult and work with developers and landholders, such as Metro Vancouver or the Bowen Island Conservancy, to identify and improve accessibility in their parks, buildings and other offerings.

Community Centre

BIM has a time-critical opportunity to make the community centre accessible, especially in terms of communication and safety in meeting rooms, front desk services, performance spaces, and recreation facilities. Technology and training will be essential.

- Communication technology will be incorporated into all public spaces to achieve communication accessibility, including hearing and vision accessibility) for those present in-person and for those interacting online. For example, this includes individual microphones for Council, and audio room systems (e.g., Auracast) for theatre, recreation facilities, meeting rooms, and the front desk. It also includes signage, emergency alarms (and other safety procedures) for communication in emergencies.
- Furnishings, recreation equipment, washrooms, and other architectural design features will be selected and used to maximize accessibility to all.
- Staff and users will be trained to ensure the appropriate use of technologies and behavioural accommodations for accessibility.

Beaches

Bowen has many beaches, some of which are attractive due to their inaccessibility. Nevertheless, they have been described and rated for accessibility in the 2017 Parks Plan.

- Commencing with the beaches identified as Community beaches, BIM will work to increase accessibility (including hand-rails, wide pathways and gently sloped access for visitors in wheelchairs), and later to other beaches where practical. The National Parks Guidelines will be referenced for these improvements to increase accessibility.
- BIM will make efforts to maintain access to beaches that are themselves accessible, by moving obstacles such as logs to allow for a 5-foot gap between path access and tide line, on an annual basis to move winter high water logs.
- Accessible beaches will be identified in signage and in online and other communications so that they are readily identifiable by residents and visitors.

Information and Communication

- Training will be provided for BIM staff on accessibility; staff and managers will be encouraged to obtain certification (e.g., free online courses from Accessibility Services of Canada).
- Road and other signage will utilize international symbols and be positioned to so as to be easily visible in the field of view to which it pertains.
- Print documents will be formatted in compliance with accessibility standards.
- BIM will become familiar with and utilize assistive technologies for communication.
- Electronic communications will be formatted for mobile phones, referring to accessibility standards for on-line communications
- BIM will offer multiple communication options and make it easy for people to make choices without having to make special requests.

Service Delivery and Governance

- Public meetings and service delivery interactions (in-person or remote questions or transactions) should incorporate accessibility principles.
- Priority should be given to making public meetings accessible, such as the meetings of Council, by routinely using technology for communication accessibility in hybrid in-person and virtual participants. Clear audio and visual information with minimal background noise and optimal lighting are the goal. Staff and user training in the use of the technology (e.g., microphones) will be provided to optimize effective use.
- At public meetings a roving microphone for comments for the audience should be used.
- BIM acknowledges that AAC may from sub-committees to address disability-specific (e.g., to address accessibility needs with people who have hearing impairment and/or vision impairment and/or cognitive impairment and/or mobility impairment) or or function-specific issues (for people with accessibility needs in educational, vocational or health settings) or other issues (e.g., emergency response situations).

Procurement/Advocacy/Grants

- BIM will be a resource to local businesses by providing information on how to improve the accessibility of their premises, operations and services.
- Grants may be available for various projects from external funders, BIM will be open to information from various sources, as to opportunities for funding projects that may be beneficial to the community and harnessing outside funds to accomplish BIM projects.
- BIM will work with the AAC to monitor and explore opportunities for grants or external funding for accessibility projects and infrastructure.

Costs?

BIM will seek sources of funding from different levels of government to help pay for the Multi-use path and other projects.

Timeline?

Immediate priority will be given to Community Centre Accessibility

- tech solutions will be used to address audio issues in all spaces for the hard of hearing
- public transport to the Community Centre is a high priority.

- Category 1:
 - Endorse
- Category 2:
 - Revise
- Category 3:
 - Expand

Do we have enough information, or do we need more?

What are useful, practical things, feasible, do-able - things that can happen in year 1. Consider costs, funding sources (outside of taxes).

Concise template/framework

National AccessAbility Week is an annual event to celebrate the contributions of people with disabilities. It also promotes inclusion and accessibility in communities and workplaces across Canada. The Act states that National AccessAbility Week will be celebrated each year starting on the last Sunday in May.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada/act-summary.html#h2.02>

training: <https://accessibilitycanada.ca/>

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Priorities:

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

Information Gathering - further research as a priority item. Continue to identify barriers.

- Learning to a greater extent who needs what - survey own population
- Research comparisons/ideas (city of Vancouver plan - strategic plan)
- Standards - are we complying with them.

Cross referencing our existing municipal policies/plans - e.g. transportation, recreation, to improve accessibility.

a. Monitoring

A monitoring report will be produced on an [annual] basis and be delivered at the [first accessibility committee meeting of the fiscal year]

b. Evaluating

The organization will conduct a review and evaluation of the accessibility plan every three years from adoption [2025]. This plan will be made public on our website within [timeline].

a.) Monitoring and Implementation

- **BIM** will continue to develop and refine Accessibility Plan action items informed by the needs of people living with disabilities in the Bowen Island community with input from the AAC and community stakeholders. (**keep refining plan**)
- The Accessibility Plan's priorities items will be reviewed by the AAC and BIM staff every **three years?** in accordance with the Accessible BC Act.
- BIM will implement and identify accessibility through strategic planning, OCP review and budget management processes during their annual planning cycles.
- Accessibility planning includes participation in decision making in project planning and **community engagement processes.**
- Members of the AAC will provide input in to the BIM Accessibility Plan ongoing and will utilize community feedback as part of a monitoring process. Feedback mechanism on website... Sharing ideas...
- **AAC may want to commit to making an annual report to BIM on progress on work completed or not completed on the one-year date of the plan.**

b. Evaluating

- Establish clear impacts on accessibility – work with AAC to determine whether the accessibility plan priorities have been completed with intended impact for those with diverse abilities in the Bowen Island community.
- **Timeline** – measurable performance indicators as well as the lived experience of AAC and community stakeholders. Examples...

9. Conclusion

1. Priorities are reflected across the three types of data collected.
2. Long history and many existing BIM documents covering issues raised – some have been completed but many still need attention
 1. Time critical: New Community Centre
 - a. Communication – hearing accessibility
 - b. Recreation - need to address seniors access
 2. Over-arching issue: Transportation – implementing what anticipated in various plans.
 - a. Lack of alternative public transportation.
 - b. Imperative to drive (own cars vs bus/taxi/uber) but then parking challenges.
 3. Systematic progress: importance of nature; beach/trail accessibility

10. How to give us feedback

11. Appendices

- Appendix A: Survey Results
- https://bowenland.civicweb.net/document/294479/Data_All_230602.pdf?handle=F55D3BD35EEA4926AA2A0C11564BDDDB
- https://bowenland.civicweb.net/document/294480/Responses_All_230602.pdf?handle=2A2012EE0855452C9F4C536FC5B2D3AD
- Appendix B: Accessibility Community Session Feedback
<https://bowenland.civicweb.net/document/294485/230625%20ACS%20Data%20Raw.pdf?handle=46645C9864CD4AAB87FBE0F3F717BC3C>
- Appendix C: Details extracted for Existing Bowen Island Documents (see Table 1)

Excerpt

From the April 22, 2024 Regular Council Meeting

City of Port Alberni re: AVICC 2024 Resolution Submission, dated March 27, 2024

Councillor Gedye requested that the Resolution from the City of Port Alberni for consideration at the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Convention relating to addressing the needs of rural seniors in British Columbia be referred to municipal committees for information.

RES#24-202 It was Moved and Seconded That Council refer the letter from the City of Port Alberni, dated March 27, 2024, to the Accessibility Steering Committee and the Official Community Plan Steering Committee.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DUNCAN ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

July 2023



Introduction

The City of Duncan is a compact urban community, committed to delivering public services that are accessible and inclusive for everyone. The Duncan Accessibility Plan (DAP) represents our commitment to continuous improvement on the policies, practices and built environment that impact our citizens and employees to remove and prevent barriers to full participation with our organization.

In 2021, the Province of British Columbia passed the *Accessible BC Act*. This legislation requires municipalities to establish an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan, and a process for receiving comments from the public on the plan and barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. Having already established the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), and with a variety of options in place for receiving public feedback on accessibility issues, the DAP fulfills the third and final requirement of the legislation.

The DAP was developed by the City of Duncan with input from the AAC, and takes up the “social model” for understanding disability as a barrier or limitation in a person’s environment – whether social, technological, or physical – which limits a person’s activity. The City welcomes ongoing input on this plan and any accessibility issues identified by the public, and is committed to incorporating public and committee feedback into future editions of the DAP.

Message from the Mayor



On behalf of Council, I am pleased to present the inaugural Duncan Accessibility Plan. As a Council, we are committed to ensuring that the work we do is in service to all Duncan residents, and responds to the physical, social, and cultural needs of community members. The 2023 Duncan Accessibility Plan sets the foundation for the work we will do going forward to ensure the City of Duncan is accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Not only will the Duncan Accessibility Plan help us to consider the accessibility of the City as an organization, it comes at an opportune time with several community infrastructure projects about to be implemented, such as the McAdam Park playground, Centennial Park playground reconstruction, and Station Street Placemaking Project. As we move forward with implementing these and future projects, public feedback will be critical to ensuring we are on track with our accessibility goals. We look forward to hearing from you.

Michelle Staples
Mayor, City of Duncan

Message from the Committee Chair



The City of Duncan has long been committed to accessibility, and for decades has had a committee established to consider accessibility issues. The Committee represents a diverse group of people with knowledge and lived experience of disability issues. We brought this to the table when reviewing the draft Duncan Accessibility Plan and will continue to do so in the work of the Committee and for future editions of the Plan.

The Duncan Accessibility Plan is an important tool, informed by community feedback directly to the City and through the AAC, that will ensure that accessibility and inclusivity remain front of mind for future projects and initiatives.

Carol Newington
Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

Territorial Acknowledgement

The Duncan Accessibility Plan acknowledges that the City of Duncan and its residents reside on the ancestral and unceded territory of Cowichan Tribes, a Coast Salish people.

In the spirit of reconciliation, the DAP also acknowledges the disruptive legacy of colonialism, and in particular the dispersal of the Indigenous people onto limited reserve lands, along with the erosion of traditional food gathering, ceremonial and cultural practices, and systems of governance during the building of what is now, in part, the City of Duncan.

The DAP affirms that the City of Duncan is committed to working with Cowichan Tribes to acknowledge and respect their long-standing presence and Indigenous Rights and Title, respond to the adverse impacts of colonialism, and strive to advance the process of reconciliation at the local level.

Objectives

The DAP responds to the requirements of the *Accessible BC Act* to develop a plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. It builds upon the foundation set within the City's draft Official Community Plan (OCP) to foster a safe, supportive, and inclusive community that collaborates to provide equal opportunities for residents from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, income levels, ability and gender identities. The OCP further indicates that the City will work to ensure that public facilities and infrastructure are universally accessible and inclusive for all ages, abilities, and needs, and the DAP expands the scope of our work to include a review of organizational policies and practices to support greater accessibility and inclusion.

In keeping with the *Accessible BC Act*, the City will review and update the DAP once every three years in consultation with the AAC. Future updates will include public feedback received by the City through its various channels, including the Small Town. Big Conversations. public engagement platform, online Issue Reporting system, email, phone, and public input at Council and Committee meetings. With each update, the following principles will be considered:

- Inclusion
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Self-determination
- Universal design

What We Are Doing

The City of Duncan has already begun the work of improving the accessibility and inclusiveness of our organization. Core to this is having ample opportunities for input from the community. This has been achieved through the establishment of the AAC and a variety of public feedback mechanisms. Additionally, the City has taken steps to identify and remove physical barriers to engagement with City Hall and the built environment.

Committee Input

The Accessibility Advisory Committee works collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility and inclusion, focusing on the experiences of people with disabilities. The AAC provides advice to Council on strategies to reduce social, physical, and sensory barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of community life.

AAC members bring a wide range of nonpartisan views and experience with disability issues to ensure that Council hears the widest possible perspective. Half of the committee's membership is composed of people with disabilities or people who support individuals with disabilities. The AAC meets at minimum once per year, with additional meetings held at the call of the Chair.

The AAC has provided input on this inaugural DAP and will be asked to provide further input on future editions.

Feedback Mechanisms

The City has established ways in which the community can engage with the City on accessibility matters. These include a permanent forum on the Small Town. Big Conversations. public engagement platform which launched in tandem with the DAP, public input opportunities at Council and Committee meetings, the Accessibility & Inclusiveness postcard, and an online Issue Reporting system at duncan.ca through which the public can report accessibility issues for staff review and follow up.

The City also welcomes feedback by phone, email and in person at City Hall. Find out how to engage with us in our “Get in Touch” section.

Accessibility Audit

In 2021, Universal Access Design submitted to the City a study of streetscapes within the municipality as part of the Transportation and Mobility Strategy. The study produced a table of location-specific recommendations to improve the accessibility of our built environment.

Subsequently, the AAC reviewed the table of recommendations and prioritized the items to create an Accessibility Audit Workplan (AAW) for the City to follow when resources permit and opportunities arise. Find the AAW appended at the end of this plan.

City Hall

City Hall is located in a heritage building established in 1914. The City has taken several steps to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of the building, including the installation of an exterior wheelchair ramp with automatic door opener to access the building, an interior wheelchair ramp into Council Chambers, an elevator, and an accessible washroom.

Additionally, in acknowledging the colonial history of the building in which City Hall is located, the City invited Cowichan Tribes to perform a candling ceremony to cleanse the building to make it accessible and inclusive for indigenous community members.

Accessibility in the Workplace

Sensory information such as lights, sounds and smells may prevent participation in an environment. In 2015, the City approved a Scent Sensitive Administrative Policy to increase awareness and education for our employees and the public who access our buildings so that we continually support a scent sensitive working environment.

The City also supports staff in the workplace by providing adaptive tools that support the health and comfort of employees in the course of their duties.

What We Will Do

This section forms the crux of the DAP, outlining the actions identified to improve accessibility and inclusion for those working for and interacting with the City of Duncan. Implementing these actions will require contributions by staff across City departments. Actions will be pursued as resources permit and as opportunities arise, and staff will seek out grant opportunities to further support this work.

The City is committed to working in collaboration with people with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure that the accessibility and inclusion work we do aligns with the lived experience of people with disabilities.

CREATE A CULTURE OF ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

Action Item	Department
Update the DAP every three years in accordance with the <i>Accessible BC Act</i> .	Corporate Services
Incorporate accessibility and inclusion in future policy revisions where possible.	Corporate Services
Update the Customer Service Policy to identify the ways in which staff can support accessibility in their interactions with members of the public.	Corporate Services
Update the Human Resources – Recruitment Administrative Policy to ensure job postings and job descriptions clarify inclusive hiring practices.	Corporate Services
Update the New Employee Orientation Policy with information on how employees can request accommodations.	Corporate Services

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Action Item	Department
Review the City's Public Engagement Policy with an accessibility lens.	Corporate Services
Update the City's Communications Plan with an accessibility lens, with particular attention to delivering information to citizens who primarily use non-electronic forms of communication.	Corporate Services
Maintain a permanent forum on Small Town. Big Conversations. to facilitate ongoing public input on the DAP and accessibility issues in the community.	Corporate Services
Enable closed captioning for Council Meeting broadcasts on YouTube and during Zoom meetings.	Corporate Services
Update the City's Public Hearing Process policy to describe what accommodations can be made for accessible participation.	Corporate Services
Work with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to update the Accessibility & Inclusiveness postcard.	Corporate Services
Recognize AccessAbility Week annually to promote accessibility and inclusion in the workplace and in the community.	Corporate Services

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Action Item	Department
Continue to apply the accessibility criteria outlined in OCP Development Permit Area guidelines.	Planning
Include accessibility features when developing new parks and green spaces.	Engineering and Public Works
Update the City's Building Accessibility for Disabled Persons Policy.	Planning
Update the City's Public Art Policy with an accessibility lens.	Planning
Identify priority projects from the Transportation and Mobility Strategy Accessibility Audit Workplan for Council consideration during the annual budget and capital project planning discussions.	Public Works & Engineering
Investigate expansion of options for online payments.	Finance

Get In Touch

Join the conversation at Small Town. Big Conversations.

bigconversations.duncan.ca

Find us on the web at duncan.ca.

Report an accessibility issue at duncan.ca/issue-reporting/

Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/CityofDuncan

City of Duncan

200 Craig Street

Duncan, BC V9L 1W3

250-746-6126

duncan@duncan.ca

Transportation and Mobility Strategy

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT WORKPLAN

The location-specific items in this document were identified through the Accessibility Audit completed in 2021 as part of the City of Duncan's Transportation and Mobility Strategy. At its meeting on July 11, 2023, the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee reviewed and updated the list, and identified the following as priorities:

- Upgrade all pedestrian crossings noted in the Workplan in accordance with current best practices.*
- Complete all recommended improvements at Canada Ave/Duncan St/Ingram St/Queens Rd (First railway crossing).

Canada Ave / Duncan St / Ingram St / Queens Rd (First railway crossing)

- Install Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs) in the curb ramps at the intersection of Canada Ave and Ingram St and at the intersection of Duncan St and Ingram St*
- Redesign pedestrian path of travel at the island by creating a level passage*
- Ensure that all curb ramps at these two intersections align with the path of travel*
- Install flashing pedestrian sign at south corner of Duncan St and Queen Rd to improve visibility for East/West traffic*

Canada Ave / Duncan St (Second railway crossing aligned with Kenneth St)

- Redesign the sidewalk/ramp combinations to reduce the slope to maximum 1:12*
- Paint high-vis indicators along the edge of the sidewalk/ramp combinations in the parking lot
- Realign the sidewalk/ramp combination to create a straight path of travel from Duncan St to the opposite side of Canada Ave*

Canada Ave / Duncan St (Third railway crossing through Charles Hoey Park)

- Install TWSIs on all curb ramps related to this pedestrian crossing*

Government St / Trunk Rd / Canada Ave / River Rd / Duncan St

- Install audio indicators for the pedestrian crossing signal at the northwest corner of Canada Ave and Government St*
- Upgrade curb ramps at the pedestrian crosswalk at Cowichan Way and Trunk Rd intersection to align with the pedestrian path of travel*
- Ensure that all curb ramps incorporate TWSIs and linear tactile indicators*
- Provide a level landing area at the top of the curb ramp on the east side of River Rd near the pedestrian crossing signal button*
- Upgrade the sidewalk along Government St to remove all trip hazards and surface degradation

Jubilee St (Between Government St and Kenneth St)

- Install correctly designed curb ramp adjacent to the accessible parking stall
- Ensure that when street design is upgraded, that sidewalks have a minimum 1200mm width
- Consider providing a level path of travel at all driveway transitions to mitigate the relatively steep side slope of the sidewalk

Jubilee St / Government St

- Upgrade Government St across from Jubilee to create a clear sidewalk path of travel beside/around accessible parking stall
- Ensure that curb ramps on Jubilee St incorporate TWSIs and linear tactile indicators*
- Redesign curb ramps at Jubilee St and Government St to align with the path of travel*

Station St (Between Craig St and Government St)

- Install pedestrian controlled signaling at mid-block crosswalk*
- Upgrade transition from crosswalk to sidewalk on both sides to remove uneven surfaces that may represent a trip hazard*
- Install TWSIs on each side of this mid-block crosswalk*
- Install a ramp adjacent to the designated accessible parking stall to allow for sidewalk access without travelling through vehicle path of travel
- Install TWSIs and tactile direction indicators at the crosswalk at Craig St and Station St*

Trans-Canada Highway (Between Coronation Ave and Trunk Rd)

- Upon upgrades to this sidewalk area, incorporate trowel grooves in direction of path of travel to assist person with limited vision or who uses a white cane

Trans-Canada Highway (Entrances to “The Farm” and Ramada)

- Highly recommended to install a pedestrian-controlled crosswalk across Trans Canada Highway at this location*
- Upgrade pedestrian crossing at the entrance to “The Farm”, including adding linear tactile indicators along the path of travel and TWSIs on each side of the driveway*
- Ensure that regular maintenance policy provides for clear path of travel and removal of vegetation encroachment
- Upgrade transition at the “Imperial Welding” driveway to reduce slope of sidewalk
- Upgrade sidewalk to remove sections that may present a trip hazard due to uplift or surface degradation

Trans-Canada Highway / Coronation Ave

- Upgrade intersection design by redesigning curb ramps to align with crosswalks and provide direct path of travel*
- Ensure curb ramp install includes TWSI's correctly positioned and incorporate current wayfinding features*
- Repaint yellow curbs
- Reposition crosswalk call button to area that can be accessed by someone using a mobility aid*

Trans-Canada Highway / Dobson Rd

- Increase the width of the curb ramps at the Dobson Road pedestrian crosswalk and ensure that TWSIs and linear tactile indicators are incorporated in the new design; ensure that curb ramps are aligned to path of travel*
- Highlight pedestrian crossing by including a painted crosswalk*

Trans-Canada Highway / Trunk Rd

- Upgrade intersection design by redesigning curb ramps to align with crosswalks and provide direct path of travel*
- Ensure curb ramp install includes TWSI's correctly positioned and incorporate current wayfinding features*
- Repaint yellow curbs

Trunk Rd (Between Brae Rd and Trans-Canada Highway)

- Upgrade all curb ramps from Brae Road to St Julien along Trunk Rd to reflect current best practices*
- Upgrade all pedestrian crossing activation buttons to current best practice*
- Ensure that the island at Ypres St crossing has level passage*
- Upgrade all Trunk Rd tree wells by removing trip hazards
- Upgrade sidewalk crossing at Petro-Can to remove all trip hazards and uneven surfaces*



BRIEFING

To:	Accessibility Committee	For the Meeting of:	January 16, 2025
From:	Grants Program Manager	Date Prepared:	January 3, 2025
SUBJECT:	Federal Grant for a Free Workplace Disability Management Assessment (WDMA)		

PURPOSE: To inform the Islands Trust Accessibility Committee of a new Federal Grant (only available in BC) for a free [workplace disability management assessment](#), which helps organizations improve disability management services, reduce costs related to injury and sickness, enrich or fulfill accessibility plans, and meet accessibility legislation requirements.

BACKGROUND:

This grant has received an extension, and local governments that did not apply during 2023-2024 can now apply for an assessment in 2025.

These assessments can assist local governments in meeting their requirements for accessibility plans under the Accessible BC Act legislation.

A workplace disability management assessment typically involves interviews with people who are involved in providing and receiving disability management services. The assessment considers 16 elements such as processes, communication, and data practices. Participants will receive a report that outlines strengths and weaknesses and gives recommendations to help the organization reach best practices. Following the assessment, local governments can also access up to \$7,500 to implement the recommendations.

The WDMA is administered by the [National Institute of Disability Management and Research](#) (NIDMAR). NIDMAR is a non-profit organization committed to reducing the human, social, and economic costs of disability. Through collaborative initiatives with leaders in business, labour, government, education, insurance and rehabilitation, NIDMAR has been assisting Canadian and international workplaces to achieve best practices in disability management through the promotion of education, professionalization, and program standards.

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

FOLLOW-UP: For further information and to apply for this opportunity contact NIDMAR staff (steve.inouye@nidmar.ca or nidmar@nidmar.ca).

If this assessment is completed there is a potential subsidy of up to \$7,500 designed to support workplace efforts in addressing issues identified in the program assessment.

Prepared By: Mike Richards, Grants Program Manager

Reviewed By/Date:



REQUEST FOR DECISION

To: Accessibility Committee **For the Meeting of:** January 16, 2025
From: Legislative Services **Date Prepared:** January 7, 2025
SUBJECT: Proposed Accessibility Committee 2025/2026 Meeting Schedule

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Accessibility Committee adopt the proposed meeting dates of April 15, July 10, and October 7 in 2025, and January 15, 2026, for the 2025/26 fiscal year.
2. That Accessibility Committee schedule all 2025/2026 meeting dates as electronic meetings.
3. That Accessibility Committee schedule all 2025/2026 meeting dates from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

SENIOR STAFF COMMENTS:

The proposed meeting dates allow for appropriate coordination of financial activities with Executive Committee and Trust Council meeting dates, and allows adequate time for staff and Committee members to perform their duties with appropriate care and due diligence.

1 PURPOSE:

- 1 To determine the 2025/26 meeting schedule for the Accessibility Committee (AC); and
- 2 To make decisions around meeting formats (electronic or in-person).

3 BACKGROUND:

Meeting Dates

Near the end of each fiscal year, the AC will determine the meeting dates for the next fiscal year by way of resolution. The AC will plan its meeting dates on a fiscal year basis rather than by calendar year, aligning corporate activities with the corporate year which supports work plans and budgeting activities.

Proposed meetings dates for 2025/26 year are as follows:

PROPOSED AC DATE	ASSOCIATED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DATES	TRUST COUNCIL DATES
Tuesday, April 15, 2025	June 4, 2024 (EC agenda deadline May 30)	June 17-19, 2025
Thursday, July 10, 2025	September 3 (EC agenda deadline August 29)	September 16-18, 2025
Tuesday, October 7, 2025	November 19 (EC agenda deadline November 14)	December 2-4, 2025
Thursday, January 15, 2026	February 25, 2026 (EC agenda deadline February 20)	March 10-12, 2026

Meeting Format

Staff are requesting that AC determine as early as possible if they wish to continue with electronic meetings. Early decision making in this regard will help staff with meeting logistics and will inform budget planning for this area.

Electronic meetings create time savings for members and staff who do not have to travel and time savings for staff in terms of travel, accommodation and catering arrangements. Electronic meetings also generates several thousands of dollars in cost savings to the organization annually, and reduces corporate greenhouse gas emissions in alignment with Islands Trust values. In addition, fully electronic meetings tend to generate higher quality meeting recordings for future public viewings.

Trust Council Bylaw 101 permits Council Committees to conduct fully electronic regular and special meetings. Section 11.11(a) states: *"A regular or special meeting of a Council committee or a special meeting of the Executive Committee may be conducted entirely by means of audio or audio and visual electronic communication facilities if a majority of the members of the committee have agreed by resolution that the meeting may be conducted in this way and provided the Secretary has received sufficient notice and can make the necessary arrangements."*

4 IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION

ORGANIZATIONAL:

Allows for appropriate coordination of financial activities with Executive Committee and Trust Council meeting dates, and allows adequate time for staff and Committee members to perform their duties with appropriate care and due diligence.

FINANCIAL:

No financial impact associated with setting meeting dates.

Selection of all electronic meetings for 2025/26 will generate a few thousand dollars in financial savings as well as reduced greenhouse gas emissions and time savings from reduced travel.

POLICY: None.

IMPLEMENTATION/COMMUNICATIONS: Administrative staff will organize the meetings.

FIRST NATIONS: None.

OTHER: None.

5 RELEVANT POLICIES:

[Trust Council Bylaw 101](#)

[Trust Council Policy 2.3.1 Council Committee System](#)

6 ATTACHMENT(S): None.

RESPONSE OPTIONS

Recommendations:

1. That Accessibility Committee adopt the proposed meeting dates of April 15, July 10, and October 7 in 2025, and January 15, 2026, for the 2025/26 fiscal year.
2. That Accessibility Committee schedule all 2025/2026 meeting dates as electronic meetings.

3. That Accessibility Committee schedule all 2025/2026 meeting dates from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Alternatives:

1. That Accessibility Committee adopt the proposed meeting schedule for the 2025/26 calendar year with amendments [as directed].
 2. That Accessibility Committee direct staff to schedule only the 2025/26 AC meeting dates of _____, _____, _____ as electronic meetings.
 3. That Accessibility Committee direct staff to schedule all the 2025/26 AC meetings as in-person meetings.
-

Prepared By: Robert Barlow, Legislative Services Clerk

Reviewed By: David Marlor, Director, Legislative and Information Services/January 8, 2025