DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN

AGENDA

HEALTHY COMMUNITY ADVISORY SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING

November 26, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.
Council Chambers
Metchosin Municipal Hall

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1. Agenda, Additions, Approval

2. Presentations

3. Public Participation

4. Adoption of Minutes
a) Healthy Communities Advisory Select Committee, October 22, 2024 1

5. Receipt of Minutes
a) Public Works and Protective Services, October 21, November 18, 2024 3

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

7. Reports
a) Council Liaison
b) Fire Chief
c) Seniors Information Resource Centre (SIRC) Liaison
d) Poverty Reduction Subcommittee
e) Health and Safety Subcommittee

8. Correspondence

9. Other Business
a) District of Metchosin Draft Accessibility Plan..... 9

10. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

District of Metchosin

Minutes
Healthy Community Advisory Select Committee Meeting
Oct 22, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.

Present: Shari Rourke (Chair), Sarah Anthony, Councillor Sharie Epp (Council Liaison), Jim Macpherson, Kathleen Sutherland, Stephanie Dunlop, Barrett Fullerton, Shannon Carman (Recorder), Ted White

Regrets: Peter Havers, Chris Pratt

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m.

1. Agenda, Additions and Approval

Shari R. add Accessibility Committee under Other Business.

Moved and Seconded by Jim M. and Kathleen S. that the Committee approve the agenda as amended.

Carried

2. Presentations

None.

3. Public Participation

None.

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Shannon C. and Shari R. that the Committee approve the minutes of the Healthy Community Advisory Select Committee meeting held on September 24, 2024.

Carried

5. Receipt of Minutes

None.

6. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) HCASC Priorities

Shari R - Staff have been restructuring the Advisory Committees. Meetings will likely now be every second month, with special meetings called by the Chair. More information to come.

7. Reports

a) Council Liaison

Metchosin Wellness Collective proposal - two physiotherapists with lots of experience want to use the room beside the preschool to divide into four to provide health services. These may include physio, podiatrist, naturopath, registered nurse, nutritional support, and mental health practitioners. They would use the gym for related events. Can also take pediatric patients. They have submitted a business plan; staff are tasked to move on with negotiations.

Councillor Epp is putting in an application for a lighted crosswalk at Hans Helgesen School - with the new daycare slated for the same location, will be a busy crossing.

b) Fire Chief

Brand new recruits starting in January, doing first responder course now. Also working with new scope for medical calls, and new EMR program, and new Primary Care Paramedic training (seven or eight firefighters who now have that). Increased ability to provide critical care. CPRs are also up in the community.

c) Seniors Information Resource Centre (SIRC) Liaison

October 10, 2024 aging in place workshop, 16 attended, put on by Seniors Helping Seniors. October 16, 2024 was a hearing health presentation from Ears to You, six attended that. Hearing clinic will be on October 30, 2024, five spaces already filled. ICBC driving safety was on the 17th, with good tips and what to expect at age 80. Another one of those coming up in January. Online music night with Dan Gallant October 24, with Access Westshore. Soup Social at MCH happening on November 23. Person College is coming, only 30 people can take part (by donation). Pearson home visits starting soon again too.

d) Poverty Reduction Subcommittee

The contractor is putting together the final report.

e) Health and Safety Subcommittee

Working with Juan de Fuca to provide more community first aid courses.

8. Correspondence

None.

9. Other Business

a) Accessibility Committee

The deadline to apply is October 25, 2024.

10. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

Adjourned at 5:52 p.m. Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 26, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.

District of Metchosin

Minutes
Public Works and Protective Services Committee Meeting
October 21, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Metchosin Municipal Hall

PLEASE NOTE: The meeting has been recorded.

Present: Councillor Epp in the Chair, Mayor Little, Councillors Donaldson, Gray and Shukin. Also present was Bob Payette, Chief Administrative Officer, Geoffrey Kreek, Chief Financial Officer, Stephanie Dunlop, Fire Chief, and Jennifer Miller, Legislative Services Assistant (recorder).

The meeting was called to order at 9:11 p.m.

1. Agenda, Additions and Approval

Moved and Seconded by Mayor Little and Councillor Gray that the Committee approve the agenda as amended with the addition of the following under the Councillor's Report:

- Metchosin Wellness Collective

Carried

2. Adoption of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Councillor Shukin and Mayor Little that the Committee adopt the minutes of the Public Works and Protective Services Committee meeting held, June 10, 2024.

Carried

3. Receipt of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Councillors Shukin and Donaldson that the Committee receive the minutes of the Healthy Community Advisory Select Committee meeting held, June 25 and September 24, 2024.

Carried

4. Reports

a) Staff Report, Metchosin School 2024 Update

The Chief Administrative Officer provided an overview of the Staff Report, Metchosin School 2024 Update.

Committee discussion:

- Management plan timelines
- Healthy Community Advisory Committee's role and Terms of Reference
- Facility rental fees and user groups
- Security
- Parking, overflow parking, line painting budget
- Suggestion to clarify how much revenue goes to MACCA and to the District

- Accessibility
- Operations
- Grounds and garden responsibilities
- Active Transportation Network Plan
- Staff resources

Moved and Seconded by Mayor Little and Councillor Shukin that the Committee receive the report on the Metchosin School 2024 Update for information.

Carried

b) Staff Report, Protective Services Quarterly Reports, June, July and August 2024

The Fire Chief provided an overview of the Staff Report, Protective Services Quarterly Reports, June, July and August 2024.

Committee discussion:

- Medical calls and response times
- Concurrent calls
- Call stats and priority levels
- Pre-fire plans: residential and commercial
- Structure defence plans
- Fire Smart home assessments
- Revenue generating activities
- Recruitment and training

The Staff Report, Protective Services Quarterly Reports, June, July and August 2024 was received for information.

c) Staff Report, UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) Grant Application

The Fire Chief provided an overview of the Staff Report, UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) Grant Application.

Committee discussion:

- Grant is related to equipment and training
- Shoreline spill response
- Coordination and training with the Western Canadian Marine Response Corporation (WCMRC) and Sc'ianew First Nation
- Potential access to grants related to evacuation planning

Moved and Seconded by Councillor Shukin and Mayor Little that the Committee recommend Council approve an application to the UBCM Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF) Grant Application;
And authorize the Mayor and CAO to execute any agreements related to a successful grant application.

Carried

d) Vision Zero in Road Safety Grant, Hans Helgesen School Lighted Crosswalk

Councillor Epp provided an overview of the Vision Zero in Road Safety Grant, Hans Helgesen School Lighted Crosswalk.

Committee discussion:

- New childcare space at Hans Helgeson School
- Safety concerns near the Metchosin Store, MyChosen Café, and Metchosin Community Hall and potential for a pedestrian activated light at the crosswalk
- Active Transportation Network Plan and Village Core area

Moved and Seconded by Councillors Shukin and Donaldson that the Committee recommend Council approve an application to the BC Vision Zero in Road Safety Program for a lighted crosswalk at Hans Helgesen School;
And authorize the Mayor and CAO to execute any agreements related to a successful grant application.

Carried

Moved and Seconded by Councillor Shukin and Mayor Little that the meeting be extended past 10:00 p.m.

Carried

e) Councillor's Update

Councillor Epp provided the following updates:

- Public Works
- Protective Services
- Metchosin Emergency Program Stakeholders
- CREST (Capital Region Emergency Services Telecommunications)
- CRD Arts Commission
- Metchosin Seniors' Association
- Healthy Community Advisory Select Committee
- Cell Service
- Metchosin Wellness Collective Business Plan for Metchosin School

Committee discussion:

- Cell service, providers, and towers
- Health services in Metchosin and timing of the Wellness Collective proposal

Moved and Seconded by Councillors Gray and Donaldson that the Committee recommend Council approve, in principle, the concept of the Metchosin Wellness Collective;
And that Council direct staff to proceed with negotiations.

Carried

Moved and Seconded by Mayor Little and Councillor Gray that the Committee recommend Council send a letter to Rogers and Telus relaying the message Metchosin would welcome improved cell service in the community.

Carried

5. Adjournment

Moved and Seconded by Councillors Shukin and Donaldson that the meeting be adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

Carried

Certified Correct:

_____ _____

Chair **Corporate Officer**

District of Metchosin

Minutes
Public Works and Protective Services Committee Meeting
November 18, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Council Chambers
Metchosin Municipal Hall

PLEASE NOTE: The meeting has been recorded.

Present: Councillor Epp in the Chair, Mayor Little, Councillors Donaldson, Gray and Shukin. Also present was Bob Payette, Chief Administrative Officer, Stephanie Dunlop, Fire Chief, and Jennifer Miller, Legislative Services Assistant (recorder).

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Agenda, Additions and Approval

Moved and Seconded by Councillors Mayor Little and Councillor Donaldson that the Committee approve the agenda as presented.

Carried

2. Presentation

a) Lavinia Rojas, Resolution to AVICC and UBCM, Regarding a Province-Wide Ban on Consumer Fireworks

Lavinia Rojas and Andrea Miller, provided a presentation on a resolution to the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities (AVICC) and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) regarding a Province-Wide Ban on Consumer Fireworks including:

- Proposed resolution for a province-wide ban on consumer fireworks
- Current challenges
- Key concerns
- Proposed actions
- Benefits of a ban
- Rationale
- Presentations at other municipalities in the Capital Regional District
- Enforcement

3. Public Participation

Anna Whiten, resident and Vice President of the Metchosin Equestrian Society, expressed concerns regarding fireworks, noted an injury to a member due to fireworks, and urged Council to support a full ban or to implement a community awareness program.

Bev Bacon, resident, supports a province-wide ban on fireworks.

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Mayor Little and Councillor Gray that the Committee adopt the minutes of the Public Works and Protective Services Committee meeting held, October 15, 2024.

Carried

5. Receipt of Minutes

Moved and Seconded by Councillors Gray and Donaldson that the Committee receive the minutes of the Healthy Community Advisory Select Committee meeting held, October 22, 2024.

Carried

6. Reports

a) Councillor's Update

Councillor Epp provided the following updates:

- Public Works
  - Windstorm clean up
  - Preparations for snow removal and inclement weather
  - New dump truck added to fleet
- Metchosin Seniors' Association
  - Annual Flu and Covid Clinic held November 2, 2024
  - Fundraising efforts
  - Holiday Lights Tour
- Cell Service
  - Correspondence to Rogers and Telus
  - Upcoming presentation to Council
- Workshops
  - Municipal Protected Areas Project
  - Illegal Fill Dumping in the Capital Regional District

There was discussion regarding illegal fill dumping and soil deposit regulations.

7. Correspondence

a) Lavinia Rojas, Resolution to AVICC and UBCM, Province-Wide Ban on Consumer Fireworks

Moved and Seconded by Councillors Epp and Donaldson that the Committee recommend Council support the possibility of a resolution for a province-wide ban on consumer fireworks going to AVICC and UBCM.

Carried

8. Adjournment

Moved and Seconded by Councillors Little and Donaldson that the meeting be adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Carried

Certified Correct:

_____ _____

Chair **Corporate Officer**

Adopted: **, 2024

REPORT TO COUNCIL

To:	Bob Payette, Chief Administrative Officer	File No. 0650-20
From:	Tina Hansen, Deputy Corporate Officer	
Date:	November 4, 2024	
Re:	**District of Metchosin Draft Accessibility Plan**	

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the District of Metchosin Draft Accessibility Plan be made available for public comment until November 22, 2024.

PURPOSE:

To present the District's draft Accessibility Plan to Council, seeking support to invite public comment prior to Council's consideration of approval of the Plan.

BACKGROUND:

In December, 2023, Council approved the District's participation in the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee ("the Committee") with partnering municipalities for the preparation of an initial Accessibility Plan with a focus on employment and servicey delivery. Staff, in collaboration with our partners, has completed the draft inaugural Plan and is seeking support to invite public comment prior to Council's consideration of approval.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Langford hosted the first year of the Committee meetings. The Committee met five times (four regular and one special meeting) with minutes provided to Council and placed on the District's website.

The Committee undertook two surveys – the first (Dec. 8, 2023 – Jan. 31, 2024 with 163 responses) to seek input as to how people wanted to be engaged, and the second survey (Mar. 1, 2024 – Apr. 7, 2024 with 185 responses) to identify barriers to municipal employment and service delivery that people may face while interacting with the municipality. Responses were received from almost 350 people and a summary of this engagement was provided to Council in May. This survey work formed the basis for the Committee's next steps of facilitated public engagement through a consultant with lived experience.

The firm, Changing Paces, led three in-person and four online engagement sessions in July, adding an additional online session to ensure sufficient opportunities for public participation. The table below outlines the date, time and location of these engagement sessions:

Date	Time	Location
July 16, 2024	7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Virtual
July 18, 2024	1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Virtual
July 22, 2024	1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Colwood City Hall
July 23, 2024	7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Langford Legion
July 24, 2024	10:00 p.m. – 12 noon	Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion
July 26, 2024	10:00 a.m. – 12 noon	Virtual*

* Replaced Sooke's scheduled in-person session due to the Sooke Potholes Area Wildfire.

Changing Paces presented their report, including recommendations to the Committee at a special meeting in early September 2024.

The Changing Paces report, a review of the survey responses provided, and discussions with staff form the basis of the draft Accessibility Plan (Attachment A). As noted above, this initial Plan focuses on employment and service delivery representing the first two standards or priority areas in the *Accessible BC Act* and in accordance with Council's direction. The remaining six standards will be incorporated into the Accessibility Plan over time as the Plan evolves and is updated.

The other partner municipalities in the Committee are utilizing similar opening and closing sections for their Accessibility Plans, but the core of their documents is specific to each municipality and will be considered this fall by those respective Councils.

The next steps, should Council support the recommendation, will see the District's draft Accessibility Plan posted on the District's website and made available for public review and comment to late November. The Plan and comments received will then come back to Council for consideration at a Council meeting prior to the end of 2024. Council's approval of the Plan will satisfy the legislative requirement to develop a Plan under the *Accessible BC Act*. The Accessibility Plan will serve as the tool for accessibility-related service delivery and employment improvements in the District as we strive towards becoming a barrier-free community.

As set out in the Terms of Reference, the Committee is nearing the point in time where it will transition to be a group comprised of community representatives. Advertisements were prepared for recruitment and each municipality will undergo its own recruitment process in November and December. This timeline should see a new Committee in place for 2025, coinciding with the start of the City of Colwood's assumption of the annual hosting responsibilities. An amended Terms of Reference (Attachment B) is provided with this report, updated to reflect a joint community committee composition.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The collaboration in the development of the Accessibility Plan with the partner municipalities has seen mutually beneficial cost sharing of the consulting firm. Similarly, during this inaugural year, staff from the partner municipalities have contributed significantly to the development of the Plan and the Committee's work.

It is anticipated that the collaboration will continue with finalization of the Plan in late 2024 and early January 2025 with the inclusion of suitable images.

Annual hosting responsibilities will see distribution of hosting costs over time.

Actions and initiatives contained within the District Plan may have financial impacts that will form part of future annual budget deliberations.

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:

The Accessibility Plan aligns with the Social and Governance pillars of Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan to:

- Be a resilient, inclusive and engaged community;
- Continue to develop safe, connected, and active transportation options;
- Facilitate public engagement; and
- Create and maintain a trusted and respectful organization

OPTIONS:

1. THAT the District of Metchosin draft Accessibility Plan be made available for public comment until November 22, 2024.

2. THAT Council request further information from staff.

Respectfully submitted,

J Hansen

Attachments:

1. Draft District of Metchosin Accessibility Plan
2. Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

DRAFT ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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Introduction

The City of Colwood, Township of Esquimalt, District of Highlands, City of Langford, District of Metchosin, District of Sooke and the Town of View Royal have partnered to show their commitment to making sure our services are available to, and inclusive of everyone including employees.

Together, our partnering municipalities form the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Committee recognizes that accessibility doesn't have borders, and when our communities work together, we are able to strive toward our goal of becoming a barrier-free region by sharing resources, knowledge, and skills.

The first accessibility plan, this plan, will begin to satisfy the requirements of the *Accessible BC Act* by providing clear instructions on how the partner municipalities will provide more accessible employment standards and improve service delivery through an accessibility lens. Accessibility Plans will be created and revised in consultation with the Committee, however the document will ultimately belong to each municipality to serve as a guiding resource.

In 2023, the Committee Terms of Reference were created. The membership of the Committee was comprised of staff members from the seven municipalities (City of Colwood, Township of Esquimalt, District of Highlands, City of Langford, District of Metchosin, District of Sooke and the Town of View Royal). The Terms of Reference outline the process for membership transition in early 2025 to comprise of citizen representatives from the member municipalities.

Territorial Acknowledgement

The member municipalities comprising of the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee sit upon the traditional territories of the following Nations:

- BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin)
- MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat)
- Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay)
- SȾÁUTW̱ (Tsawout)
- T'Sou-ke
- W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip)
- W̱SIKEM (Tseycum)
- xʷsepsəm (Esquimalt)
- Songhees
- Lək̓ʷəŋən, SENĆOŦEN, and Hul'q'umi'num speaking First Nations

We respect and acknowledge the rich diversity within each of these Nations.

Vision Statement

The Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee is looking forward to the accessibility journey across all partner municipalities. Through public feedback, Committee work, ongoing learning,

and Federal and Provincial legislation, we are working towards a future where everyone is able to participate fully and equally and is empowered to live their life to the fullest. Municipal facilities, spaces, and services welcome all to explore, visit, and enjoy. Employment opportunities are meaningful and accessible, welcoming diverse applicants. The member municipalities continue to learn and adapt by receiving feedback from residents and visitors, while developing and implementing exciting advances towards universal design. With support from the CRD, Provincial and Federal Governments, things that were once viewed as "accommodations" or "accessible features" are now becoming the common standard.

Background

What is the Accessible BC Act?

Introduced in 2021, the *Accessible BC Act* was passed by the Provincial Government of British Columbia. The *Accessible BC Act*, or "the *Act*" enables improvements to accessibility to all residents and visitors. The Act also shares some similarities with the *BC Human Rights Code* and other pieces of legislation. There are eight (8) standards included within *the Act*:

1. Employment
2. Service Delivery
3. Built Environment
4. Information and Communications
5. Transportation
6. Health
7. Education
8. Procurement

This plan focuses on Employment and Service Delivery. As accessibility work continues within the member municipalities, the plan will be revisited and revised as we address the other standards prescribed by the legislation.

The *Act* recognizes several types of barriers that people experience including attitudinal, physical, informational or communication, systemic, technological, and sensory.

Over 750 organizations in the Province are required to take action to identify and remove barriers to accessibility. Municipalities are an example of one of these organizations and must meet the following requirements to the extent possible with a goal of:

- Committee makeup to be reflective of the diversity of persons within our communities including Indigenous perspectives. 50% of committee membership must be people with disabilities, or individuals who support persons with disabilities. As written in the Committee Terms of Reference, the membership of the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee will be expanded to include citizen representatives from all partner municipalities. Working collaboratively with the Province of British Columbia, the first

step identified for the partner municipalities was to focus on the aspects of Service Delivery and Employment.
- Establishing a committee to assist in identifying barriers to interacting with the local government and provide recommendations on the removal and prevention of these barriers.
- Create an Accessibility Plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the municipality, review and update at least once every 3 years, and consider comments received from public feedback.
- Create a feedback mechanism for receiving questions and comments from the public pertaining to accessibility.

To comply with the Act, and with support from the Province, the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee was formed. Working together, the Committee has produced an overarching Accessibility Plan which is customized for each municipality. While these areas are different, the plans unite us and share similarities that create an accessible experience for residents and visitors in each community.

Accessibility work is ongoing and requires continuous adaptation and review. The Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee will collaborate with the member municipalities as identified in the Terms of Reference.

Member Municipalities

The member municipalities are located on the Southern end of Vancouver Island within the Capital Regional District. All municipalities share serene natural beauty and unique connections to nature such as lakes, oceans, mountains, and forests. The region includes urban centers and is integral to the islands workforce and provides housing, shopping, and recreational aspects for residents while balancing rural charm, west coast character and stunning areas with untouched natural elements.

Our communities offer rich cultural heritage including community events including festivals, markets and local artwork that support social connection. The member municipalities are places for people to discover, feel welcome, and belong. Our ongoing work regarding accessibility will further our commitment to vibrancy, resiliency, and diversity.

The table below provides some additional information regarding the makeup of our communities:

	Colwood	**Esquimalt**	**Highlands**	**Langford**	**Metchosin**	**Sooke**	**View Royal**
Total Population	18,961	17,533	2,482	46,584	5,067	15,086	11,575
Citizens over 65	3,655	3,625	450	6,405	1,320	3,055	2,415

Parks	50	30	7	57	6	80	72
Land Area (square kilometers)	17.66	7.08	38.01	41.43	69.57	56.62	14.33

Definitions

To work together effectively, we must first create a shared understanding of concepts and words you will find in this plan. Below are some helpful definitions:

"Accessibility" is the concept of making a product, service, or experience that can be used or interacted with by everyone – including individuals with disabilities or impairments.

"Barrier" Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with a disability

(a)caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies, and

(b) affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.

"Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee" Committee comprised of the City of Colwood, City of Langford, Town of View Royal, Township of Esquimalt, District of Sooke, District of Highlands, and District of Metchosin.

"Disability" means an inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier.[1]

"Impairment" includes a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.[2]

"Inclusion" is the practice of providing equitable access to opportunities and resources for anyone who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.

"Plain Language" is the use of basic sentence structure and simple language so that the audience understands the message clearly.

About the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee

Recruitment

The Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee was initially formed of staff representatives from each of the participating municipalities. The Terms of Reference for the Committee state that membership will transition to members of the public from each municipality.

[1] Definition as written from the *Accessible BC Act* (Government of British Columbia , 2023).
[2] Definition as written from the *Accessible BC Act* (Government of British Columbia , 2023).

Meetings and Information

Each member municipality has a webpage focused on accessibility where you can also find information about the Committee. The member municipalities will rotate hosting the Committee on an annual basis. If you are unsure who is hosting or where you can get information, please reach out to any of the member municipalities.

Public Consultation Conducted to Date

Summary

The Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee has completed two phases of formal public consultation between December 2023 and July 2024. In addition to the formal engagement, each member municipality, as required by the *Accessible BC Act*, has established an email address to receive input, ideas, and comments from the public pertaining to accessibility. Feedback received through this required mechanism helps inform the accessibility work of the communities.

If using email does not work for you, please contact your municipality. Our municipal partners are happy to work together to find a solution.

The first phase of public consultation consisted of two surveys that were available online through the Let's Chat Langford platform, on paper, and could be emailed if requested. Survey #1 (Appendix 1) focused on finding out how people would like to engage with their municipality when talking about accessibility, where these engagement sessions should take place, and if they should be in person or online. Survey #2 (Appendix 2) explored accessibility needs from the perspective of individuals with disabilities and those who support individuals with disabilities in respect to municipal service delivery and employment. This survey was more in depth and robust asking participants questions about their personal experiences interacting with their municipality, accessing services provided, and applying for or working with their municipality in an employment or volunteer capacity.

The Committee reviewed the results of the surveys and discovered that more information was needed from the public regarding municipal service delivery and employment prior to the member municipalities drafting their accessibility plans.

The Committee released a Request for Proposals to retain a professional consultant with lived experience to guide the next phase of public consultation. Changing Paces, a professional firm which specializes in coaching, counselling, advocacy, and support for individuals with disabilities or accessibility needs was selected and awarded the contract. Beginning in July 2024, Changing Paces worked with the Committee to host in person and online accessibility engagement based around the findings of Survey #2. After the public consultation was complete, Changing Paces produced a final report for the Committee (Appendix 3). The feedback received during all phases of public engagement has informed this Accessibility Plan and will continue to shape and support the work undertaken by the partner municipalities as a result. All communities involved

with the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee are committed to listening and learning from the public to increase accessibility throughout the region.

Who Was Consulted?

Participants of Phase 1 and 2 of the public consultation that helped inform this plan include members of the public, municipal staff members, families and caregivers of those with disabilities, community organizations, and service providers. This diverse participation resulted in rich and wholesome discussions including the sharing of personal experiences, suggestions, critical observations, and solution-based conversations.

In total, the Committee heard from 378 members of the public throughout all phases of engagement.

How Consultation Was Conducted

In Phase 1 of public engagement, Survey #1 and #2 were hosted through the City of Langford's "Let's Chat Langford" platform that offers online survey hosting capabilities and information sharing. This platform provides a simple and accessible survey format that can be easily accessed across many devices. Recognizing a need for multiple document formats, the partner municipalities also provided printed paper copies of the surveys and were able to email surveys directly to those interested in completing one.

After hearing from the public in Phase 1, the Committee worked with Changing Paces to deliver both in person and virtual engagement sessions. Our earlier feedback showed a need for engagement opportunities at different times of day and in different parts of the region. The partner municipalities were tasked with selecting locations in Esquimalt, Colwood, and Langford for people to gather and discuss accessibility. In addition, four online sessions were held at different times of day. While the sessions followed the same agenda, the conversations were shaped by the diversity and experiences of those present resulting in varying discussions.

Discussions and Key Themes – Phase 1

Survey #1 and #2 provided valuable feedback pertaining to public engagement, municipal service delivery, and employment.

Survey #1 – (December 2023 – January 2024): How and Where Should Public Engagement Take Place?

The purpose of this survey was to find out from the communities when, where, and how public engagement should take place. The Committee wanted to learn from the public prior to retaining a consultant and beginning robust public engagement.

The following key themes and discussions were captured regarding when public engagement should take place:

- Respondents wanted multiple opportunities to provide feedback at different times of days and on different days of the week.

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- Proximity to transit routes and being mindful of transit schedules.

The following key themes and discussions were captured regarding where public engagement should take place:

- As the Committee represents a larger geographic area, respondents wanted to see engagement sessions in more than one municipality.
- The survey asked respondents to identify specific accessible locations that engagement could take place. Many respondents suggested schools, municipal facilities and government buildings, hotels, and community spaces (such as community halls, and cultural facilities).
- Importance of online sessions was stressed noting individuals' busy schedules, transportation needs, personal devices and accessibility assistive technology, and personal health requirements.

The following key themes and discussions were captured regarding how public engagement should take place:

- Respondents noted a need for more than one format of presentation at public engagement events such as oral speakers, accompanying presentation, Braille, large print copies of the presentation, and closed captioning.
- An open, inviting environment free of judgement and prejudice where those with lived experience can be heard and understood.

When retaining the services of Changing Paces, the Committee was able to accurately represent the needs and wishes of the public by providing the consultant with this information from Survey #1 to help them build engagement sessions that would meet the needs of the communities.

Survey #2 – (March 2024 – April 2024): Accessibility & You

This survey focused on respondents' interactions with the municipalities through the lens of service delivery and employment. Respondents were asked to share their personal experiences, challenges, and ideas regarding these topics.

The survey opened with questions about the individual responding, asking them to self-identify any accessibility challenges or disabilities they felt comfortable sharing. The survey also invited those who care for or support an individual with accessibility challenges or disabilities to participate.

The results of this section found that our communities have many individuals living with pain related disabilities, and physical or mobility related disabilities. The survey also found that many participants were completing this survey from the point of view of a caregiver.

The following key themes and discussions were captured regarding barriers encountered when accessing municipal information:

- Websites are difficult to navigate, contain outdated information, and lack accessibility tools and considerations.
- Accessing and interacting with Council, Committee, and Board meetings is challenging from an accessibility perspective.
- Wish for more formats of municipal information (online, physical print materials, emails, newsletters, social media, news releases).
- Difficult to interact with municipal staff and Council.

Most respondents noted difficulty accessing municipal parks, trails, and playgrounds as well as participating in municipal events.

The following key themes and discussions were captured regarding barriers encountered when applying for jobs or volunteer opportunities within the member municipalities:

- Opportunities are not advertised as accessible, or do not provide enough information about what is expected from an individual.
- Respondents were unsure if their specific needs could or would be accommodated.

When searching for a job or volunteer position, accessible parking, availability of adapted spaces such as accessible washrooms, breakrooms, and common areas, and flexibility within work schedules were identified by the most respondents as highly important.

Respondents were asked to identify their top three (3) accessibility improvements they would like to see their municipality make. While many diverse answers were provided, the following three were the most common:

- Accessible parking
- Accessible washrooms
- Sidewalk upgrades

Changing Paces Engagement (July 2024) In Person and Virtual Sessions:

The Committee retained the services of Changing Paces beginning in June of 2024. Working together, the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee and Changing Paces reviewed Survey #1 and #2 agreeing that more engagement was needed relating to municipal services delivery and employment.

Changing Paces took Survey #2 and built a more robust engagement outline focusing on encouraging the public to expand further and provide more information to help inform the member municipalities' accessibility plans.

Public engagement sessions began in July of 2024 with Committee members and municipal staff working alongside Changing Paces to capture the thoughts and feedback of participants. Three (3) in person sessions were held in Colwood, Langford, and Esquimalt. In addition, four (4) online sessions were conducted. These sessions took place on different days of the week, at different times to accommodate the varying needs of the communities.

Participants were taken through an engaging introduction from Changing Paces, and then asked to discuss accessibility and their experiences, suggestions, and ideas in a judgement free environment. Questions about municipal service delivery and employment had participants considering the ways they interact with their municipal governments, and how these interactions could be improved or changed to enhance accessibility. Employment related questions had respondents thinking about their personal needs and accommodations within a workplace setting and how the municipalities could become more inclusive employers.

While all sessions online and in person followed the same agenda, each session was unique thanks to the diversity of the participants. Changing Paces was able to gather the feedback from the public and produce a final report (Appendix 3) that was presented to the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee at its Special Meeting held September 4, 2024.

The report summarized all feedback received throughout the public engagement campaign. Changing Paces then turned this feedback into identifiable barriers categorized as physical, communication, digital, customer service, policy related, systemic, and attitudinal. They also provided recommendations that municipalities could consider when addressing these barriers.

All feedback collected throughout Phase 1 and 2 of the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee's public engagement has helped form this Accessibility Plan. While some feedback collected throughout the public engagement campaign has been municipality specific, we shared many areas and aspects of municipal service delivery and employment that could be reviewed, changed, or enhanced to support accessibility in our communities.

While the City of Colwood, City of Langford, Town of View Royal, Township of Esquimalt, District of Sooke, District of Highlands, and District of Metchosin have worked together to develop this accessibility plan, these communities provide varying municipal services and employment opportunities. Working towards an accessible community is a journey, and we are all at different places. As a result, each member municipality has written their own unique section of this Accessibility Plan. There may be repetition and overlap showing that we have identified the same needs.

For ease of the reader, each Accessibility Plan is sorted into the following three (3) categories:

- What we have done (past)
- What we are doing (present)
- What we may explore (future)

Accessibility work is ongoing and continually modernizing. The following plan will support the member municipalities as they strive toward becoming barrier-free.

District of Metchosin Accessibility Plan

Introduction

The District of Metchosin is a small, rural, farming community with just over 5,000 residents on Southern Vancouver Island. Metchosin's landscape and abundance of greenspace, including regional parks and trails, provides unique recreational opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy. Many residents living in Metchosin are employed outside the community and access services such as health care, shopping, restaurants, and recreation facilities through neighbouring municipalities.

The District offers a range of municipal services including fire protection and emergency services, road maintenance and snow removal, building and planning services, bylaw enforcement, financial services, and legislative services.

Accessibility in Metchosin

The Accessibility Plan represents the District of Metchosin's commitment to creating an inclusive and barrier-free environment for all individuals interacting in or with the municipality. The Plan outlines our approach to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers that hinder participation and full engagement of individuals with disabilities.

While the District has made some progress towards improved accessibility, we recognize that there is a lot of work ahead to becoming a barrier-free community. This Plan represents our commitment to breaking down barriers and fostering inclusivity. It demonstrates our dedication to continuously learn, improve, and create an environment where every individual can thrive.

Core Values & Strategic Plan Alignment

Through Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, the following core values support and align with the Accessibility Plan:

- Be a resilient, inclusive, and engaged community.
- Continue to develop safe, connected, and active transportation options.
- Create and maintain a trusted and respectful organization.
- Facilitate public engagement.

The Regulation

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* was enacted in 2021. The legislation offers a structured approach to recognizing, addressing, and preventing accessibility barriers across British Columbia.

The *Act* includes the following eight standards:

1. **Employment**
2. **Delivery of Services**
3. Built Environment
4. Information and Communications
5. Transportation
6. Health
7. Education
8. Procurement

The initial three-year Plan focuses on **employment** and **service delivery**, which forms the basis for education and awareness training to support an inclusive and accessible workplace and service delivery model.

Employment includes all aspects of employment within the District, including but not limited to, municipal staff, volunteers, and third-party contractors.

Service Delivery encompasses the goods and services provided by the municipality and how the residents, users, and/or customers interact with them including, but not limited to, communications and technology, engaging with staff and Council, municipal events, policies, bylaws, and procedures, and navigating municipal facilities and spaces.

The Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan outlines how the District of Metchosin intends to become an inclusive and barrier-free organization by improving accessibility for people with disabilities through consultation and enhancing municipal programs, policies, and services. The Plan covers the next three years when it will be updated to reflect progress, community needs, and our growing understanding of accessibility.

The Plan is divided into distinct priority areas based on the functioning of the organization and takes into consideration the feedback received through the consultation process completed by the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee.

For the first three-year Plan, the District intends for staff to:

- Receive foundational training;
- Apply an accessibility lens to daily operations; and
- Continue to receive and consider public feedback.

The approach aims to be realistic, ensuring the Plan is both manageable and achievable using existing District resources and ensuring alignment with Council's priorities. Any actions considered will be subject to the annual budget process.

Some of the initiatives and actions listed in the Plan may be seen as focusing on one or more of the six other *Accessible BC Act* standards such as "built environment" or "information and communication" however, the listed activities that may be considered, also include aspects of "employment" and "service delivery." These items have been included in the Plan to demonstrate the District's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. As Council priorities are updated, it is anticipated that additional initiatives and actions will be identified for the other six standards of the *Act* as the Plan evolves.

The initiatives and actions are further considered under the areas of:

i. Staff and/or Council Training;
ii. Technological;
iii. Physical Space; and
iv. Policy Procedure and Plans.

The following outlines the District's past ("What We've Done"), present ("What We're Doing"), and future initiatives and actions ("What We May Explore") to achieve the Plan for the two priority areas of **employment** and **service delivery**.

A. What We've Done:

The District of Metchosin has already taken several steps to identify and remove barriers to individuals in or interacting with the municipality in the areas of employment and service delivery. Some of these successes include:

Standard 1: Employment

- Provided opportunities for virtual interviews during the recruitment process.
- Installed Bluetooth compatibility device in the Council Chambers.
- Installed new phone system in the Municipal Hall with voicemail transcription to email and hearing aid compatibility.
- Provided physical workspace accommodations such as sit-stand desks.
- Initiated remote work capabilities.
- Implemented a Respectful Workplace Policy to elevate awareness around discrimination.

Standard 2: Service Delivery

- Joined the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee (CWAAC).
- Created an "Accessibility" information page on the District of Metchosin website to share information about the CWAAC, the Accessibility Plan, and public engagement opportunities.
- Established the accessibility@metchosin.ca email address as the District's dedicated public feedback tool on accessibility.
- Implemented a new District of Metchosin website that is compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) standards.
- Implemented live-streamed Council and Standing Committee meetings.
- Conducted an internal accessibility audit of municipal facilities to identify barriers around access.
- Installed lighted crosswalks on Happy Valley Road and Rocky Point Road at the Galloping Goose crossings.
- Installed a new crosswalk on Happy Valley Road in the village centre.
- Installed new fully accessible washrooms at Metchosin School.
- Updated fire alarm system at Metchosin School to strobe light/visual alarms.
- Installed a new accessible door at Metchosin Community House.
- Installed accessibility handlebars in the Firehall washrooms.
- Replaced florescent lighting with LED lighting at the Firehall.
- Provided American Sign Language (ASL) training to Fire Department first responders.

B. What We're Doing:

While there have been past actions and initiatives related to accessibility, the District is currently working on the following:

Standard 1: Employment

- Initiating feedback mechanisms for employee input on individual needs and accommodations.
- Incorporating funding into the Five Year Financial Plan for employee accessibility awareness training.

Standard 2: Service Delivery

- Applying an accessibility lens through the development of an Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP).
- Installing a new sound system in the Municipal Hall Council Chambers to enhance inclusivity and accessibility to Council and Standing Committee meetings.
- Implementing TEAMS video integration for electronic Council and Standing Committee meetings.
- Upgrading outdoor lighting in the Municipal Hall parking lot.

- Repainting existing accessible parking spaces at District facilities.
- Applying an accessibility lens to the Emergency Program evacuation and emergency planning.
- Enhancing the Metchosin Fire Department website for improved accessibility.
- Implementing accessible communication tools through the Metchosin Fire Department to ensure that emergency alerts are accessible to all residents.
- Investigating a new accessible entrance to Metchosin School.

C. What We May Explore:

Standard 1: Employment

The District is aware that the prior sections do not cover all the needs and feedback received through the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee's consultation process. To address these gaps, accessibility needs will continue to guide the District's initiatives and actions. Accordingly, the District may consider implementing the following:

1.0	***Goal: Establish an inclusive and supportive workplace environment that empowers all employees to contribute and thrive:***	
	1.1	Promote employee engagement to better understand barriers and needs in the workplace.
	1.2	Develop accommodation policies to ensure accommodations are made for employees with disabilities.
	1.3	Explore general accessibility awareness training options that will be offered to all employees.
	1.4	Ensure training webinars and other online training opportunities for employees provide options for closed captioning or hard copy materials.
	1.5	Invest time and resources into customizing workstations for employees prioritizing existing barriers.
2.0	***Goal: Establish equitable employment practices and strategies for minimizing barriers in employment and volunteering:***	
	2.1	Review employment and volunteering recruitment practices to promote equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility and to minimize barriers.

	2.2	Update job postings and volunteer opportunity templates to improve accessibility including format and language that welcomes all abilities.
	2.3	Establish procedures to provide accommodations for persons with disabilities during the recruitment process.

Standard 2 – Service Delivery

i. Staff and/or Council Training:

3.0	***Goal: Promote staff and/or Council knowledge of supporting persons with disabilities when interacting in or with the municipality:***	
	3.1	Provide staff and/or Council awareness training around accessibility-related topics.
	3.2	Provide staff training to ensure the District's website content is compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0).
	3.3	Provide additional staff training related to: - Accessible document creation; - Accessible electronic form creation; and - Alternate text creation and usage.
	3.4	Continue American Sign Language (ASL) training to first responders.

ii. Technological:

4.0	***Goal: Ensure communications materials and systems are accessible:***	
	4.1	Ensure content and forms published on the District website are accessible and meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0).

	4.2	Ensure District surveys, forms and communication materials are accessible and provided in multiple accessible formats.
	4.3	Set guidelines for written materials that promote accessible writing.
	4.4	Enhance the District's photo library to include inclusive images for communication materials.
	4.5	Ensure timely notice of community meetings and events.
5.0	***Goal: Improve access to District public meetings:***	
	5.1	Identify and address gaps in access to Council and Committee meetings for persons with accessibility needs (i.e., electronic participation in meetings).
	5.2	Enhance electronic meeting participation by implementing closed captioning during live-streamed and recorded Council and Committee meetings.
	5.3	Consider installing a hearing loop system in the Council Chambers.
6.0	***Goal: Provide inclusive and accessible services and programs that cater to the diverse needs of the community:***	
	6.1	Implement online payment options for property taxes, business licenses, and permits.
	6.2	Implement mail ballot voting as an additional voting opportunity in future General Local Elections.

iii. Physical Space:

7.0	***Goal: Continue to work towards providing physical spaces which are accessible, safe and inclusive for everyone:***

	7.1	Engage a consultant to conduct an accessibility audit of municipal facilities and undertake identified improvements through the budget planning process and/or grant funding opportunities. (i.e., improved access within municipal buildings).
	7.2	Conduct an audit of accessible parking spaces at municipal facilities and undertake identified improvements through the budget planning process and/or grant funding opportunities. (i.e., hard surfacing accessible parking spaces at Metchosin Community House).
	7.3	Utilize the future recommendations from the Firehall Feasibility Study to advise on the planning of the Fire Hall.
	7.4	Conduct an audit of the accessible washroom in the Municipal Hall to identify barriers and improve accessibility.
	7.5	Assess the customer service area in the Municipal Hall to create an accessible workstation/kiosk or lowered front counter for persons in wheelchairs or other mobility devices.
	7.6	Ensure appropriate space in Council Chambers for wheelchairs and mobility devices including appropriate accessible seating with/without arms.
	7.7	Update smoke alarms in municipal facilities to strobe light/visual smoke alarms.

iv. Policy Procedure and Plans

8.0	***Goal: Strive to engage persons with disabilities in planning and decision-making processes to ensure that accessibility and inclusion are considered at the onset of programs, services, policies and plans:***	
	8.1	Review and update the Accessibility Plan every three years.
	8.2	Continue to receive and review feedback on accessibility achievements and areas of improvement.
	8.3	Explore opportunities to build accessibility into District policies and procedures.

	8.4	Uphold accessibility standards and regulations during the planning phases of municipal policies, procedures, programs, services, and public spaces.
	8.5	Apply an accessibility lens when developing or updating District Plans and ensure public engagement/consultation opportunities.
	8.6	Utilize the recommendations from the future Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP) to inform on future projects such as roadside trails, cycling, and other forms of active transportation.
	8.7	Advocate to other levels of government to promote and enhance accessibility for residents (i.e., B.C. Transit for transit routes/service levels).

Conclusion

The District of Metchosin is committed to the principles of inclusivity and accessibility as outlined in the *Accessible BC Act*. This Plan will be reviewed every three years by the District in collaboration with the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee.

This review will ensure the Plan continues to remain aligned with the requirements of the *Act* and continues to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities or people who face barriers in our community. By conducting this review, the District will foster ongoing improvements, identify areas for growth, and ensure the community remains a place where everyone can participate fully and equally.

Budget Note

Action items listed may need additional funding to implement and are subject to the District of Metchosin's budget planning process. The *Community Charter* requires the District to develop a financial plan each year that outlines operating and capital expenditures for the next five years. Once specific accessibility improvements are identified as part of the Accessibility Plan, the cost for implementation would need to go through the annual budget planning process for approval.

Public Feedback Tool

The *Accessible BC Act* requires organizations to establish a process for receiving feedback from the public on the Accessibility Plan and barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. To provide your feedback to the District of Metchosin, please email accessibility@metchosin.ca.

Contact Us

The District welcomes feedback on accessibility in the following ways:

Email: accessibility@metchosin.ca
Phone: 250-474-3167
Mail/Delivery: 4450 Happy Valley Rd, Victoria, BC V9C 3Z3

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Member municipalities will be utilizing this plan to develop more specific projects that will be undertaken to promote and enhance accessibility. The development of these sub-plans or specific projects will be a step forward towards implementing changes and developing accessible practices.

This plan is intentionally not prescriptive. Rather than outlining the exact steps that are to be undertaken, the plan recognizes that while member municipalities are similar, they provide diverse services and employment opportunities. The intent is that this plan will get member municipalities striving to continually enhance accessibility.

This plan will be reviewed by each partner municipality every three years.

Conclusion & Next Steps

Accessibility improvements, learning, and work will continue after the implementation of this plan. As mentioned earlier in this plan, the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee will be expanded to include members of the public with lived experience. Subsequent plans will focus less on internal operations such as employment and municipal service delivery, and more on community building and - improvements that will benefit residents and visitors as they access and interact with the member municipalities.

How to Give Feedback

Thank you for reviewing our plan! Do you have accessibility related feedback for your community? Feel free to reach out to your municipality to discuss your ideas!

City of Colwood
3300 Wishart Road, Colwood BC V9C 1R1
accessibility@colwood.ca
250-294-8157

Corporation of the Township of Esquimalt
1229 Esquimalt Road, Esquimalt BC V9A 3P1
accessibility@esquimalt.ca
250-414-7177

District of Highlands
1980 Millstream Road, Victoria BC V9B 6H1
accessibility@highlands.ca
250-414-1773

City of Langford
2nd Floor, 877 Goldstream Avenue, Langford BC V9B 2X8
accessibility@langford.ca
250-478-7882

District of Metchosin
4450 Happy Valley Road, Victoria BC V9C 3Z3
accessibility@metchosin.ca
250-474-3167

District of Sooke
2205 Otter Point Road, Sooke BC, V9Z 1J2
accessibility@sooke.ca
250-642-1634

Town of View Royal
45 View Royal Avenue, Victoria BC, V9B 1A6
accessibility@viewroyal.ca
250-479-6800

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Survey #1 “How and Where Should Public Engagement Take Place?” Excerpt of Results

Appendix 2: Survey #2 “Accessibility & You” Excerpt of Results

Appendix 3: Final Report “What We Heard” from Changing Paces

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Appendix 1 - Survey #1 “How and Where Should Public Engagement Take Place?” Excerpt of Results

Question 1: What types of engagement would you like to see?

Online surveys	129
In person focus groups facilitated by an instructor	112
Written submissions (email, letter)	81
Paper surveys or comment cards	45

Note: Question 1 allowed for respondents to select multiple options.

Question 1 also offered a fillable field for options outside of those provided. The following was received:

- Public meetings where accessibility items are the only ones discussed.
- Newsletter with updates from all involved communities with progress reports. Respondent noted that this would be nice to see every 2 months.
- Community Zoom calls/online focus groups.
- Materials using large fonts and braille.
- Visual aids and graphics use wherever possible.
- More opportunities to discuss directly with Councils. Respondent noted that this could be formal or informal (meet and greet, coffee shop pop-up)
- Advertisements in local newspapers
- Open house style engagement at municipal hall
- Open house style engagement at malls
- Virtual session hosted by a facilitator.
- Mail out

Question 2: Please indicate which venue(s) or type of venue(s) are most accessible for in-person engagement. Please note you can include venues within any of the partner municipalities (Langford, Colwood, View Royal, Esquimalt, Highlands, Sooke, Metchosin).

General submissions included:

- School Gyms
- City Hall
- Community Centre
- Recreation Centers
- Currently empty storefronts in malls or shopping centers
- Auditoriums
- Libraries
- Churches
- Buildings with a community room
- Government buildings

Respondents noted the following pertaining to a specific municipality:

Municipality:	**Suggestions:**
Colwood	• Royal Roads University • Emery Hall • Seniors Center
Langford	• Langford in General • Starlight Stadium • Westhills YW/YMCA • Four Points Sheraton • Legion • Belmont Market • Millstream Shopping Center • West Shore Mall
View Royal	• Victoria Scottish Community Centre
Esquimalt	• Esquimalt Recreation Centre • Gorge Pavilion • Legion
Highlands	• Highlands Community Hall.
Sooke	• Whiffin Spit • John Phillips Memorial Park • Ed Macgregor Park • Edward Milne School Parking Lot • Legion
Metchosin	• Metchosin Community Hall • Gym in the Metchosin Arts and Cultural Center • Hans Helgesen • St. Mary's Church • Metchosin Golf Course

Respondents noted that locations should be outfitted with ramps, automatic doors, elevators, adequate handicapped parking, and accessible washrooms. Respondents also noted that while a building may have a ramp, there may still be barriers to enter the building such as a step or ledge.

The ability for the room to host more than one interactive option was also noted as important. For example, in person oral presentation and an accompanying slide presentation, braille information, posters with large font etc.

Ample and free parking was also noted as high importance for respondents when selecting a location. Proximity to transit routes was also highlighted. A need for HandiDart parking was also identified.

Respondents noted the importance of engagement events being held in Sooke due to proximity to other municipalities, and difficulties with transit.

Importance was placed on smaller gatherings. Respondents chose to disclose that due to health challenges, they would feel unsafe in a large gathering. These same respondents noted a preference for either online events, or online

options.

Many responses indicated that engagement events should take place in every municipality involved. From those who selected specific locations, Langford, Sooke and Esquimalt were identified.

Question 3: Do you have any other suggestions?

This question was open ended and allowed respondents to type/write their own answer. Due to the nature of this question, there was a variety of responses. To make it easier to follow, the responses have been organized into categories:

Challenges:

- Lack of public engagement (public apathy)
- Don't forget about deaf or blind people when planning events.
- Disabilities and challenges can be very diverse.
- Need for American Sign Language interpreters for events.
- Closed captioning.
- Don't forget families and caregivers.
- Can be difficult to make improvements to accessibility while growing as a community.
- Lack of beach accessibility

Event Specific:

- When planning an event, be aware of bus service end times.
- Host events at multiple times of the day so more people may attend.
- Dark evenings can be a barrier for people to attend events.
- Need for small, intimate events.
- Need for large gathering events.
- Importance of virtual options so more people can participate and use their own devices/adaptive technology.
- Consider traffic impacts when choosing a time for engagement activities.
- Don't forget about service animals at events.
- Advertise events as wheelchair accessible (but only if they are).
- Difference between handicapped parking and accessible parking.

Committee Feedback:

- Sub-committee made up of residents.
- Excitement for the public to join the Committee and a wish that they had been included as members from the beginning.
- Would like to see more progress reports coming from Committee to the Council level.
- Request to see the feedback presented.
- Don't forget to include the Disability Alliance of BC, Inclusion BC, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, BC Center for Ability, Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center, and Canadian National Institute for the Blind when promoting the Committee.

General Accessibility Considerations:

- Request input before making changes to barriers in the community.
- Wish for the process to be quick.
- Desire for road structure to be left out.
- Public availability of the Station Road (Langford) Accessibility Report.
- Ability to speak freely with no judgement.
- Wish to not hire consultants.

- Municipalities should publish a document listing all accessible buildings/businesses and their features (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.

Appendix 2 - Survey #2 “Accessibility & You” Excerpt of Results

Question 1: Do you (or the person you are assisting) identify as having a disability or disabilities, or have you or they experienced an accessibility challenge at any time? *(The Accessible British Columbia Act defines “disability” as meaning an inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier.)*

This question was multiple choice, and the following answers were collected:

Yes	90
No	59
No, but I have a connection with someone with a disability	30
Prefer not to answer	5

Question 2: Which type or types of disabilities impact you (or the person you are assisting)?

Physical/mobility	91
Learning	9
Developmental	7
Memory	11
Hearing/auditory	25
Mental health related	29
Seeing/visual	11
Pain-related	38
I do not have a disability and I am not assisting someone with a disability	47
Prefer not to answer	6

This question allowed respondents to select multiple options.

While this question also had a field titled “other”, the responses collected above are adequate. Information collected in this fillable field included personal and possibly identifiable information about the respondent(s) such as explicit details of a medical condition.

Question 3: Please identify your age range (or that of the person you are assisting)

Under 18	7
18-24	2
25-34	12
35-44	21
45-54	24
55-64	30
65-74	51
75+	29
Prefer not to answer	3

Question 4: In which of the partner municipalities do you (or the person you are assisting) live?

Colwood	22
Esquimalt	14
Highlands	10
Langford	77
Metchosin	28
Sooke	6
View Royal	12
I do not live in one of the partner municipalities, but I often visit these areas.	11
I do not live in one of the partner municipalities and I am rarely in these areas.	0

Question 5: What barriers, if any, do you (or the person you are assisting) experience when accessing municipal information? (*Consider your municipality's website, public engagement tools (such as this survey), news releases, Council meeting recordings, or other documents produced by the municipality. Examples of barriers might be lack of alt text, confusing or offensive language, lack of captioning, etc.)*

Feedback specific to each municipality:

Colwood	• Prefer written and print materials over online only. • Wish to engage in person rather than only online. • Difficulty hearing at Council meetings or on the recorded video. • Wish to see local newspapers used more as an outlet for municipal information. • Wish to receive an email newsletter with updates from municipality. • Links are out of date on website. • Wish for more contact information for City staff.
Esquimalt	• Website is difficult to use. • "Link in bio" is not user friendly or accessible. • No captioning or unsure how to access captioning on Council Meetings. • Too much information only shared on Facebook and not offline.
Highlands	• Website is difficult to use.
Langford	• Website is difficult to use. • Website is not accessible.

	• Event calendars are not up to date. • No captioning or unsure how to access captioning on Council Meetings. • Search function on website is not helpful. • Difficulty finding information pertaining to finances. • Difficulty finding information pertaining to development. • Committee and Council resolutions are difficult to find on website. • Difficult to get in touch with City staff. • Difficult to get replies from City staff and Council. • Difficulty accessing Council meetings through doors after 7pm. • Inconsistent sound in Council Chambers • Contact phone number send callers through too many steps or loops them back through.
Metchosin	• Website is too basic. • Information is difficult to find on website. • Search function on website is not helpful. • Difficulty hearing at Council meetings. • Timeliness of information on website to be improved.
View Royal	• Website navigation is difficult. • Inconsistent sound in Council Chambers during meetings and on recordings
Sooke	• Website is difficult to use. • Website homepage is too cluttered. • Website is not up to date. • Takes too much time to find what you are looking for on website.

General Feedback:

- Respondents who have colour blindness have a particularly difficult time accessing our municipal websites.
- Website information can be convoluted or insufficient.
- Not everyone uses websites or the internet.
- Confusing to access municipal information.

Question 6: Please indicate if you (or the person you are assisting) experience any barriers.

Accessing municipal parks, trails, playgrounds?	61
Accessing municipal programs or services?	18
Engaging with Council?	27
Accessing municipal buildings and grounds?	24
Interacting with bylaws or policies?	15

Interacting with municipal staff?	20
Participating in municipal events?	30
Interacting with signage/wayfinding around the municipality?	15
Accessing municipal sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes?	69

This question also allowed respondents to type/write their own answers through a field titled "other." The following feedback was collected:

- Difficulty accessing municipal buildings during renovations and building alterations. Wished for municipalities to make sure ramps and accesses are available for those who need them at all times.
- Snow and inclement weather make transportation and access to municipal buildings difficult as when snow is piled, it is often placed in accessible parking areas.
- Snow piles on sidewalks and crosswalks prevent those with mobility assistive devices from accessing municipal roadways.
- Wish to see stronger municipal policies and bylaws around supportive housing and accessible units.
- Difficulty hearing in large or crowded places or events.
- Lack of access to public washrooms.
- Beach accesses are often limited to those who are not using mobility assistive devices.
- Need for more accessible parking.

Question 7: What barriers do you (or the person you are assisting) experience when applying for jobs or volunteer positions with your local government? ***(Examples of barriers might relate to job postings, interviews, communications regarding employment, etc.)***

This question allowed respondents to type/write their own answers. The following feedback was collected:

Feedback specific to a municipality:

Colwood	• Hard to sit or stand for long periods of time. • Inadequate bus service and lack of stops
Esquimalt	• Discrimination for disability and being transgender. • Lack of accessibility information so I don't feel comfortable applying. • Lack of understanding of what a neurodiverse person may need.
Highlands	None collected.
Langford	• Not sure if hearing loops are available. • Not sure if sign language interpreters are available. • Information overload. • Generally struggle in interview settings • Lack of close proximity parking can lead to lots of walking which I am unable to do. • Timelines to apply are too short. • Perceived or real age barriers • Inadequate bus service and lack of stops

	• Very few positions available • Unsure of what positions are available. • Stairs generally are a barrier for me accessing volunteer opportunities in the community.
Metchosin	• Difficulty navigating website. • Need visual diagrams to understand concepts and often, those are not provided or included.
View Royal	None collected.
Sooke	• Would like positions, but currently not able to do them. • Previous volunteer positions were not accommodating, nervous to try again.

General Feedback:

- Difficult or confusing interview processes
- High-level language.
- Discrimination based on being in a wheelchair.

Question 8: What supports are important to you (or the person you are assisting) when working or looking for a job?

Accessible Parking	49
Adapted spaces such as restrooms, breakrooms, reception area, meeting areas, or pathways	42
Modified workstations such as standing desks or wheeled mobility device-adaptive desks	36
Assistive devices such as screen readers, braille displays, text-to-speech software, strobe light/visual smoke alarms, or hearing loops	11
Flexible work hours	55
Shorter workdays	31
Working from home	54
I am not working or looking for a job	71

This question allowed respondents to type/write their own answers. The following feedback was collected:

- Accessible pedestrian and rolling lanes for transportation to and from work.
- Advocacy needed for more bus stops and service so employees can meet work start times.
- Rather than adapted spaces, have them be inherently accessible from the beginning.
- Free and safe staff parking.
- Employer and staff education regarding trauma informed care and accessibility.
- Soft lighting.
- Soft door closing.

- Office space to limit distractions.
- Communication supports.
- Support for neurodivergence.
- Elevators and adequate seating.

Question 9: Please list the top 3 accessibility improvements you (or the person you are assisting) want to see your municipality or the municipality you visit make:

Colwood	• Accessible parking, especially at events. • Advocacy needed for accessible parking at schools. • Accessible public washrooms • Removal of gravel and bark mulch on trails. • Flat and firm surfacing for trails. • More sidewalks • Wider sidewalks • More pedestrian crossings • Remove “maze gates” at local parks (entrances that include switchbacks). • Wheelchair access to local parks to be improved. • Wheelchair access to beaches to be improved. • Quiet spaces or covered tent at local events for neurodiverse and families to rest. • Have accessibility requirements built into the development and building process. • Signage to indicate terrain and difficulty of trails.
Esquimalt	• More sidewalks • Wider sidewalks • More bus shelters
Highlands	• Sidewalks • Streetlighting • Road markings need to be more visible. • Consider installation of “cat eyes” on the roads.
Langford	• Complete sidewalks • Accessible benches • Automatic doors to be mandated in community. • Smoother transitions and curb cuts • Automatic doors with adequate opening time. • Lights at crosswalks • ASL interpreters • Staff training for hearing technology. • Staff training regarding accessibility accommodations. • Pedestrian rolling lanes and paths. • Adult change stations in public washrooms
Metchosin	• Lighting at building entrances.

	• Ramps. • Safer bike access on roads. • More roadside trails that support walking, biking, and mobility assistive devices. • Improve accessibility to Pioneer Museum, Metchosin School. • Paving trails and access to farmer's market. • Gravelled areas changed to smaller aggregate. • Sound system upgrade in Council Chambers. • Accessibility signage. • Safer street crossings. • Accessible parking. • Advocacy needed for additional bus routes and more service. • Upgrade museum and bookstore halls to allow wheelchair access. • Crosswalk installation across Happy Valley to the MyChosen Café. • Elevator installation in the Metchosin Arts and Cultural Centre Building. • Need for more housing options such as assistive housing, supportive housing, co-ops. • Add participation on Zoom for Council meetings.
View Royal	• Wider sidewalks. • Wider streets.
Sooke	• Sidewalks (need more, and wider ones). • Wheelchair ramps in more places.

Sidewalks are extremely important to respondents, but it should be noted that these sidewalks are needing to be made of quality materials, adequate width or oversized, and align appropriately with curb cuts and adjoining walking paths or sidewalks.

Question 10: Do you have any additional comments or ideas for improving accessibility in our municipalities?

Colwood	• Consider using all forms of communication. • Sidewalk and bus stop maintenance during snow events is not sufficient. • Need for additional traffic calming in areas that do not have sidewalks. • More streetlighting • Need for more public washrooms. • Need for rubber surfacing in playgrounds. • Need for accessible park benches to be placed in shaded areas. • More budget for accessible retrofits. • Need for live captioning and ASL interpreters at municipal engagement events. • Install lighting at crosswalks. • Opportunities to work from home with flexible hours or at an

	adaptive workspace.
Esquimalt	• Need for more accessible parking. • Reduce foliage and plants near sidewalks and cut back overhangs. • Reduce tripping hazards on sidewalks. • More sidewalks • Connectivity for sidewalks • More accessible parking spaces • Access to sidewalks while areas are under construction. • Website is difficult to navigate. • Accessible access to beachfronts and trails
Highlands	• Accessible trails • More bike lanes • Wider road shoulders
Langford	• Publish results of Langford Station accessibility audit publicly. • Wish for the building code standards to be exceeded. • Need for advocacy to the CRD to improve the access at Atkins to the E&N Trail. • Staff training regarding accessibility and inclusivity. • Boardwalks and lakefront spaces to increase accessibility. • Insufficient parking in downtown core. • Need for both wider and longer accessible parking spots. • Explore possibility of car free roads in downtown core. • Simpler reception system over the phone. • Need for sidewalks and crosswalks particularly on Walfred Road. • Need for more parks and trails in the downtown core. • Reports are difficult to understand and there's a need for visuals to be included. • Advocacy is needed to improve BC Transit service and scheduling. • More playgrounds are needed. • Universal design could be adopted in the City to be a leader. • Need for accessible drinking water stations for humans and their service animal companions. • Provide answers to questions in plain language and take time to explain concepts. • Reduce plants and foliage at corners so pedestrians can be seen. • Sidewalk access at Redington Ave to Millstream Plaza is needing to be improved. • Need for more walkable areas. • Need for engagement with seniors living in care facilities. • Include more part time and remote work options in the job bank on the website. • Need for more green spaces to promote mental and physical health. • Advocacy needed for BC Transit service in the area. • Need for additional safety measure with bike lanes.

	• More enforcement for illegal parking as it can obstruct walkways and accesses. • Advocacy needed for the CRD to review connections for the Galloping Goose Trail from an accessibility perspective. • Audio Visual in Council Chambers needs to be improved. • Meeting minutes are difficult to find.
Metchosin	• Community Ambassadors to welcome newcomers. • Need for one information hub for accessible features located within the municipality. • Need for flattening and smoothing trails for ease of use with mobility assistive devices. • Lack of housing options may make people need to leave as downsizing or aging-in-place is not an option. • Need for paved or hard surfacing around municipal buildings. • Need for more street lighting. • Need for more parks, trails, and outdoor spaces to have accessible features. • Wish to see public engagement regarding accessible parking.
View Royal	• Increased availability of public washrooms. • More sidewalks. • Sidewalk maintenance. • More accessible parking spaces. • Separated bike lanes. • Clearer website. • Larger website font. • Active transportation needs an accessibility lens as not everyone can use it.
Sooke	• Wish to establish a day to celebrate people with diverse abilities. • Need for more automatic doors. • Need for single accessible washrooms with locking doors for privacy. • Connecting sidewalks. • Safer crosswalks. • Opportunities to work from home with flexible hours or at an adaptive workspace.

General Feedback:

- Excited to apply to join the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Municipal advocacy needed to remove utility poles from sidewalks and walkways.
- Electric cars are very quiet and can be a hazard for those with hearing impairments.
- Municipalities could go on a “walk and roll” in their community with those with lived experience to review challenges firsthand.
- Make use of local agencies and resources that help further accessibility in our communities.
- “Live Chat” feature to speak with municipal staff.

- Difficulty finding support or advocates within the community.
- Local government is confusing; would like opportunities to learn about it.

Appendix 3 – Final Report “What People Said…” from Changing Paces

Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee Community Engagement Report

Developed by ChangingPaces.com
Delivered on September 5, 2024

Introduction

In July 2024, the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee (CWAAC) hired Changing Paces, an accessibility consulting firm, to conduct a survey they had developed. The intention was to have facilitated sessions to more fully consider the questions sent out to the community in the spring of 2024. They ran four two-hour virtual workshops, and three in-person workshops titled “Gauging Accessibility in Capital West AAC Communities.” The workshops were facilitated by Trish Robichaud, the founder and CEO of Changing Paces, and Marie Marchildon, a Subject Matter Expert on disability, both having lived experience with disability.

The CWAAC is comprised of the Corporate Officers representing seven municipalities: The City of Colwood, the Township of Esquimalt, the District of Highlands, the City of Langford, the District of Metchosin, the District of Sooke, and the Town of View Royal. From March 1, 2024, to April 7, 2024, the committee undertook a survey to determine what barriers people with disabilities encounter within their municipalities.

Hiring Changing Paces to facilitate a more in-depth exploration of the needs of people with disabilities around municipal facilities, goods, and services in the seven municipalities, was the next step in compiling information to use in creating the communities’ accessibility plan. By engaging people face-to-face, even if over Zoom, the level of authenticity and vulnerability of the participants grew

exponentially. This allowed the feedback to directly reflect actual municipal barriers experienced by citizens with disabilities in these seven communities. The focus of the initial accessibility plan is Service Delivery and Employment.

Along with a more in-depth look at the survey, the presentation included sharing their personal experience with disability. Discussion included topics such as stigma, barriers, the pros and cons of labels, and ideas for improving working relationships between people with disabilities and municipal staff. Also discussed was “what it would be like to have ultimate accommodations on the job.” These discussions proved to be hearty and insightful, providing rich qualitative data.

The quality of the data collected is substantial. Changing Paces participated in the effort to promote the engagement events along with the partner municipalities. Changing Paces used social media channels, emailed disability organizations and various stakeholders, and placed ads in the local paper. In total, thirty surveys were gathered. The following is the collected data, together with target areas to address, and our recommendations for CWAAC’s inaugural accessibility plan.

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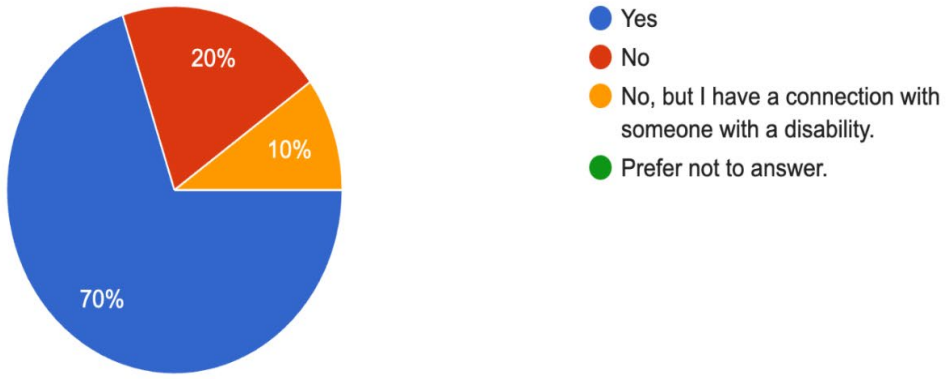
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Question 1.

1. Do you (or the person you are assisting) identify as having a disability or disabilities, or have you or they experienced an accessibility challenge at any time ?

30 responses



70% - Yes

20% - No

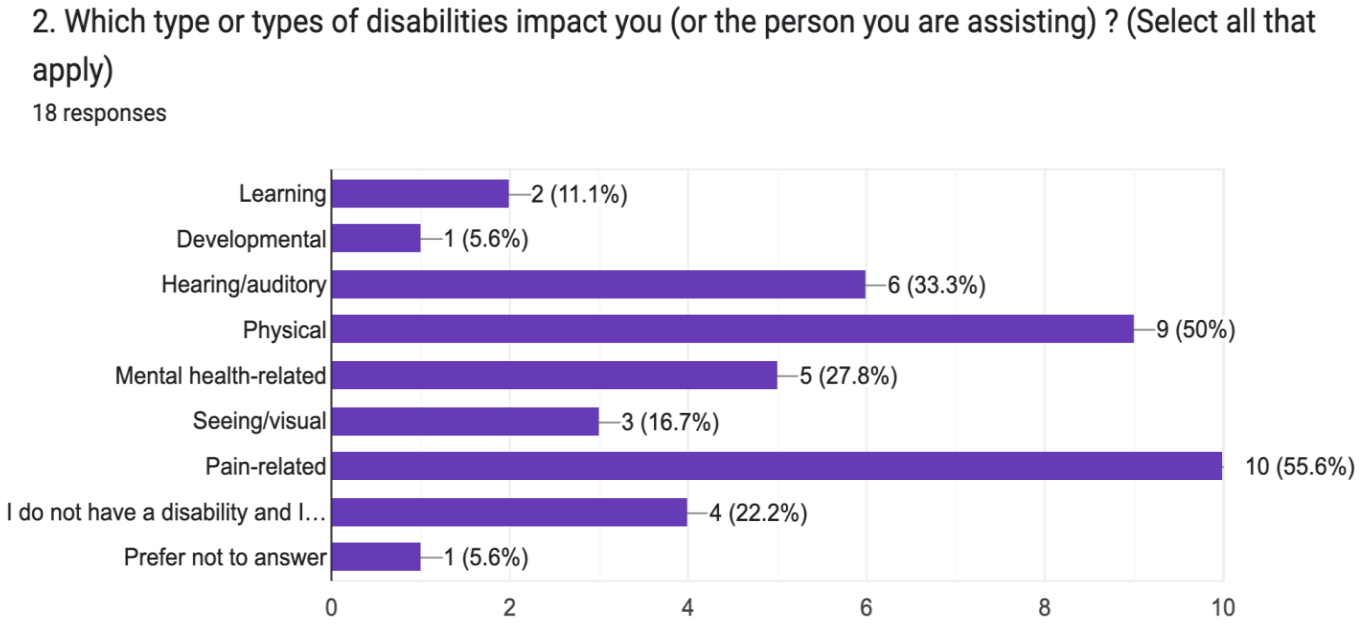
10% - No, but I have a connection with someone with a disability.

0% - Prefer not to answer.

……..

This pie chart shows the percentage of individuals who have or know anyone with a disability or have experienced an accessibility challenge. [The data indicates that the “Yes” was the most answered, noting the importance of addressing accessibility challenges and issues.] While the survey represents a small sample size relative to the overall population, the quality of the discussions makes it clear that there is a need to address accessibility challenges and issues across all seven municipalities.

Question 2.



11.1% - Learning

5.6% - Developmental

33.3% - Hearing/auditory

50% - Physical

27.8% - Mental health-related

16.7% - Seeing/visual

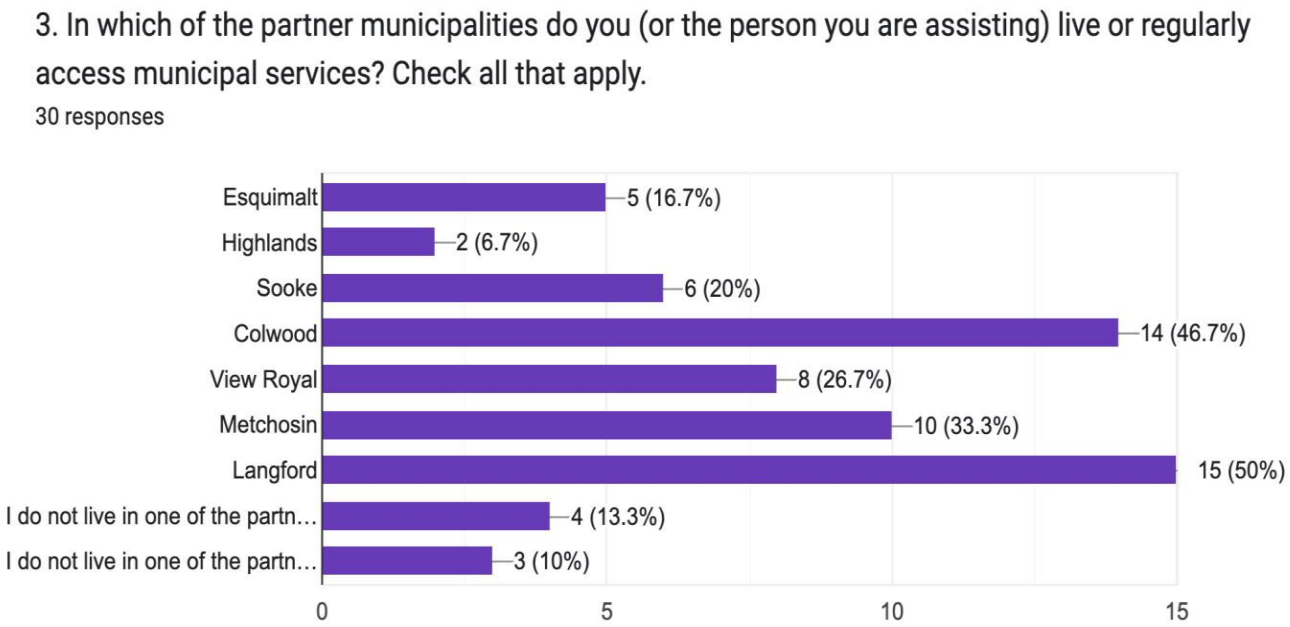
55.6% - Pain-related

22.2% - I do not have a disability and I am not assisting someone with a disability.

5.6% - Prefer not to answer

The bar graph above shows the type/s of disabilities that the respondents may have encountered or are currently experiencing. Physical and pain-related disabilities ranked the highest out of the choices.

Question 3.



16.7% - Esquimalt

6.77% - Highlands

20% - Sooke

46.7% - Colwood

26.7% - View Royal

33.3% - Metchosin

50% - Langford

13.3% - I do not live in one of the partner municipalities, but I often visit these areas.

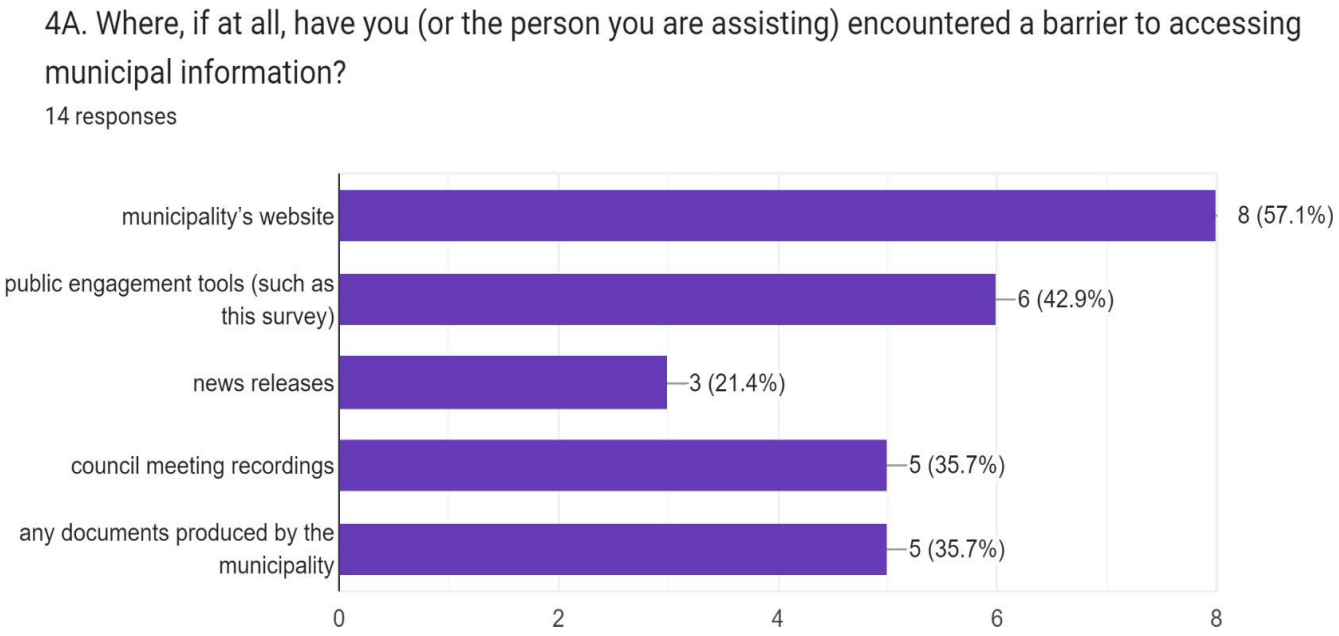
10% - I do not live in one of the partner municipalities and I am rarely in these areas.

……

The bar graph indicates that most of the
respondents came from the municipalities of Langford (50%) and Colwood (46.7%). Regardless

of the municipality, some answers to our surveys had similarity in terms of addressing accessibility issues, which will be explored more below.

Question 4A.



The bar graph shows areas that the respondents encountered the following barriers to accessing municipal information. The “municipality's website” and “public engagement tools” ranked as the two highest.

42.9% - municipality’s website

33.3% - public engagement tools (such as this survey)

19% - news releases

28.6% - Council meeting recordings

28.6% - any documents produced by the municipality

4.8% - I have not encountered this, but we have heard many times where persons have had trouble with website, news releases, Council meetings

4.8% - Any documents produced, personal interaction, people are uncomfortable do not know what to say, maximize font size on signage, presentations

……..

The following questions below and their responses exhibit the accessibility concerns that need the municipalities' attention.

Question 4B.

4.B. If you (or the person you are assisting) indicated experience with a barrier when accessing municipal information, on part one of this question, please provide details below.

What People Said:

In terms of accessing municipal information, the issues most often raised were website accessibility, online information, and ease of access. Specifically, they said the following*:*

- Municipal websites not user friendly to diverse needs of people with disabilities, very limited/no engagement opportunities for PwD [persons with disabilities], no notice/accommodation to reduce/eliminate barriers for them, news releases not in alternate formats/sufficient notice for booking transportation, not enough accessible parking, no universally accessible bathrooms on site, automatic doors not working or don't exist, recordings difficult to impossible for those visually/hearing impaired, documents not in alternate format and documents not readily available.
- Sometimes it is difficult to find documents on websites, especially if visually challenged. Alternative formats would be useful.
- Too many levels you need to navigate to get to the correct department.
- The search function on websites is very difficult.
- An event was held that didn't offer suitable parking (required walking a long distance)
- Website a hunt and search exercise.
- Trying to access documents can be difficult.
- Not in plain language and in symbols colors or red.
- Council meetings are long and exhaust me. I can watch the live meeting on Zoom, and watch recordings, but it's hard to participate with the public comment process.
- Websites are difficult to navigate, information is in more than one place, difficult to assess what is the most recent information.
- Some surveys don't work with just the use of a keyboard and screen-reader. Glad this this one does.
- The person I am assisting wants more info or is looking to be involved, but often feels information is lacking.
- Easier access to resources.

- Knowing the engagement opportunity might only see or recognize if it was on Colwood's Instagram.
- Finding forms and you have to go to many different spots to find what you need.
- People using microphones do not speak loud enough and I can't hear questions or comments.
- Langford website is not user friendly, can't do simple searches, and not-community focused.

Identified Barriers

a. Physical Barriers

- Inadequate accessible parking and long walking distances at events.
- Lack of universally accessible bathrooms and functional automatic doors
- Poor audio quality during meetings, making it hard to hear speakers.

b. Communication Barriers

- News releases and documents not available in accessible formats.
- Delays in accessing front counter staff.
- Lengthy Council meetings that may hinder participation.

c. Digital Barriers

- Websites are not user-friendly or accessible for people with disabilities.
- Difficulty navigating websites and using search functions.
- Information is scattered, outdated, and hard to find.
- Lack of alternative formats for documents and forms.
- Surveys and digital resources are often not compatible with assistive technology.
- Difficulties accessing recordings and participating in public participation opportunities.

d. Customer Service Barriers

- Lack of clear and accessible information about resources and opportunities.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

4B 1. Physical Solutions

4B-1i – Strive to exceed the minimum number of accessible parking spaces required by the Province of BC.

4B-1ii - An accessible front entrance with a power door should be provided to ensure ease of access for all individuals.

4B-1iii - Accessible washrooms should also include power doors to ensure ease of access for all individuals.

4B-1iv - In large or elongated spaces, consider adding seating or resting spots throughout to provide comfort and accessibility for everyone.

4B 2. Communication Solutions

4B-2i - Accessible document training is essential to ensure staff can create alternate formats, such as Microsoft Word, PDF, PowerPoint, and social media content.

4B-2ii - Providing timely notices of community events and meetings allows individuals to book transportation as needed.

4B-2iii - Municipalities may consider increasing front counter staff coverage. This is an opportunity to hire diverse people, including those with disabilities.

4B-2iv - Council meeting locations should include hearing loops to accommodate those who have trouble hearing.

4B 3. Digital Solutions

4B-3i - The partner municipalities may wish to consider conducting an accessibility audit on each site where budgetary considerations are allowed, if they have not already done so.

4B-3ii - When creating forms for internal or external use, consider using electronic forms to enhance accessibility.

4B-3iii - Remind staff to allow their devices to update automatically to ensure accessibility features are up to date.

4B-3iv - On pages with downloadable files, videos, or documents, municipalities should provide an email address for those needing help accessing these resources.

4B 4. Customer Service Solutions

4B-4i - Wherever a service counter is provided, it is recommended to include a space with lowered counter height to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities.

4B-4ii - Customer service training should be conducted for all staff including accessibility. This training is most effective when all organization members participate, as this can foster a more inclusive company culture.

Question 4C.

4 C. If you (or the person you are assisting) indicated experience with a barrier when accessing municipal information in part one of this question, please share any ideas you might have on how to reduce or eliminate that barrier.

What People Said:

To address accessibility issues when accessing municipal information, the respondents shared the following suggestions:

- Provide ‘plain language’ documents.
- Provide a front counter customer service agent.
- Pay attention to meeting times – Council meeting times are hard.
- Access needs to be thought of right at the beginning and not just as an afterthought.
- Phone information may assist people with visual impairments. In-person services may be more helpful than on-line materials.
- Drop down windows showing all departments.
- I understand there is work updating the website. I trust this will make a big difference.
- Always have Accessibility parking options.
- Provide alternate text in plain language.
- Website not user-friendly.
- Better ways to search.
- Support artificial intelligence (AI) use for accessibility.
- I'd like to feel more confident that writing a letter to the Council & the District of Sooke was really going to take action. I feel people who also present in person get more attention to the issue they're writing about. I can't even sit on the wobbly folding chairs long enough to wait for a turn to speak at Council.
- More streamlined website. Perhaps a ‘Where do you want to go’ prompt on the opening page would help? Searching documents is especially cumbersome, perhaps more selection prompts like a selection prompt to search by year and type of document one wants.
- More info municipalities could share.
- I would make it, so it picks out many words when related to the search item.
- Use door to door mail or flyers for information.
- Remind speakers to speak clearly and loudly. Consider closed captioning for recorded

meetings.
- Larger font on communications, signs, alternative formats e.g.: audio, PDFs, screen readers.
- Improve search features and design of websites to help people easily find whatever they are looking for.

Identified Barriers

a. Communication Barriers

- Lack of plain language documents and alternate text.
- Inadequate phone and in-person services for people with visual impairments.
- Font sizes on communications and signs is too small, lack of alternative formats like audio or screen readers.
- Ineffective methods for disseminating information, such as limited use of door-to-door mail or flyers.
- Need for municipalities to share more information and improve public engagement.
- Accessibility needs not being considered early enough in planning processes.

b. Customer Service Barriers

- Limited front counter customer service for direct assistance.
- Perception that in-person presentations to the Council are more effective than written communication.
- Speakers at meetings need to speak more clearly and loudly, consideration of closed captioning for recordings.

c. Physical Barriers

- Minimal accessible parking options at municipal sites.
- Lack of accessible seating during Council meetings (e.g., wobbly chairs, chairs with no arms, chairs with arms).

d. Digital Barriers

- Website not user-friendly, with poor search functionality and cumbersome navigation.
- Need for a more streamlined website with prompts for easier document searching.
- Larger role for alternative formats in communications, such as PDFs, audio versions, and screen reader compatibility.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

4C 1. Communication Solutions

As in recommendations for Question 4B under communication barriers, and consider training on accessible documents,

4C 2. Customer Service Solutions

[See 4B RE: Customer Service Solutions:]

4C-2i - If someone has indicated that they cannot attend a Council meeting in person, they could be offered the option of participating virtually through electronic means.

4C-2ii - Municipalities may wish to partner with organizations that support people with disabilities who are looking for work. Staff training may help establish a company culture that encourages and supports people's self-disclosure of their disabilities.

4C-2iii - Speakers at meetings should have microphones. If microphones are unavailable, speakers can be asked to stand up when contributing to help carry their voice. Municipalities may consider closed captioning options.

4C 3. Physical Solutions

4C-3i - Municipalities should ensure there is a sufficient number of accessible parking spaces based on how many parking spots there are in total.

4C-3ii - Seating at Council meetings include space for mobility devices. Chairs must be stable and include both those with arms and those without.

4C 4. Digital Solutions

[Refer to 4B 3i, RE: Digital Solutions for recommendations on websites]

[Refer to 4B 3 RE: Digital Solutions for accessible document training it would be best to include making audios and videos accessible as well.]

Question 5.

5 A-J. Please indicate if you (or the person you are assisting) experience any barriers:

A. Accessing municipal parks, trails, playgrounds?

B. Accessing municipal programs or services?

C. Engaging with Council?

D. Accessing municipal buildings and grounds?

E. Interacting with bylaws or policies?

F. Interacting with municipal staff?

G. Participating in municipal events?

H. Interacting with signage/wayfinding around the municipality?

I. Accessing municipal sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes?

J. Other (if you wish, please provide additional information about these experiences)

What do you recommend as possible solutions to eliminate these barriers?

Question 5A.

5 A. Parks, Trails, and Playgrounds

What People Said:

When it comes to accessibility barriers in terms of parks, trails, and playgrounds, the respondents said the following:

- Universally accessible parks, trails and playgrounds where everyone is included.
- More accessible swimming and sports activities in nature/outside.
- Paved well even walkways, sitting areas.
- Build Ramps, not stairs. Everyone can use a ramp.
- Accessible benches/picnic tables (for rest) and participation.
- Accessing Esquimalt lagoon beach. I access near garbage cans 32 & 33 area - take risks with crutches to get through gravel dumped on narrow pathways (32).
- Better surfacing of the ramp at Ed McGreggor Park - very slippery when wet. Surfacing on park trails to be wheelchair navigable.
- Using symbols, colours, braille.
- Flashing light for crosswalk at the corner Veterans Memorial Park and Veterans Memorial Highway, 1 more accessible parking spot. Ramp access to gazebo.
- Conduct accessibility assessments of all public trails and fund implementation of improvements such as signage to provide trail difficulty rating.
- Wood chips instead of rubberized surfaces. My wife has noted to the City of Colwood that not

all parks are inclusive (for wheelchairs or motorized scooters).

- Could not get my mom's wheelchair through the gate easily at one of the parks in Langford. She was visiting from another municipality, and we went elsewhere to let my child to play.
- Creating a municipal accessibility plan for parks & playgrounds. Add more playground equipment that are accessible, education for municipal staff.
- Use fine-grained material on trails instead of coarse gravel.
- [Use coloured garbage cans as they are easier to locate] More options; clearly sharing information on accessibility for parks, trails & playgrounds.
- Recognition that trails are now regional roads so they can be treated as such.
- Pay attention to include people with disabilities given that there are more and more people walking over time so space will become limited.
- Ensure good communication between all trail users (including cyclists and those not on cycles).
- Bicycle lanes should be wide.
- Thank you for providing the bicycle rack.
- Gravel is not an accessible surface.
- Gravel is also unstable and can have people lose their footing (this point was trying to demonstrate that there is no good use for gravel when it comes to the public).
- Ramps that are wood are not accessible (slip hazard).
- Need more accessible playgrounds.
- Access to parks and trails from parking lot can be hard.
- Elevator is not reliable.
- Events by the [Sooke] river are not accessible.
- MacGreggor Park has challenging parts in it where events are sometimes hosted

Identified Barriers

a. Physical Barriers

- Low number of universally accessible parks, trails, and playgrounds.
- Walkways, ramps, and sitting areas are not always paved, reliance on stairs limits access.
- Surfaces like gravel and wood can create mobility challenges and safety hazards.
- Inaccessible park gates, playground equipment, and resting spots like benches and picnic tables.
- Limited accessible parking spots near key facilities and events.
- Unreliable and inaccessible elevator services at public locations.

b. Communication Barriers

- Lack of plain language documents and alternate formats such as braille, symbols, and larger fonts.

- Poor communication regarding accessibility features in parks, trails, and public spaces.
- Limited use of clear signage and accessible information indicators (e.g., color-coded garbage cans).

c. Policy-Related Barriers

- Municipal initiatives may overlook accessibility considerations.
- Need for comprehensive policies for creating and maintaining accessible public spaces and services.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

5A 1. Physical Solutions

5A-1i - Strive towards providing accessible playgrounds, adequate bench or rest stops, and smooth surfaces in common go-to areas.

5A-1ii - Surfaces such as gravel and wood chips are difficult to navigate. For better accessibility use asphalt or rubberized surfaces instead.

5A-1iii - Seating and rest stops, such as benches and picnic tables, make trails or grounds accessible for individuals who tire easily or have mobility issues.

5A-1iv - Consult with playground experts to ensure that playground equipment is designed to be accessible.

5A-1v - Washroom facilities should be designed to be fully accessible or at the very least, include an accessible stall as a minimum standard with a goal of being fully accessible.

5A-1vi - Where possible, include additional temporary accessible parking spaces near the entrance of any event.

5A 2. Communication Solutions

[See 4B Digital Solutions RE: accessible document support]

5A-2i - Create an inventory online of the accessibility features at parks, trails, and public spaces by each respective municipality would be a major asset to the public.

5A-2ii - Signage should include oversized text with significant contrast between the background and the text for better readability.

5A-2iii - Provide signage indicating trail difficulty or challenges to help users navigate effectively.

5A 3. Policy-Related Solutions

5A-3i - Integrate accessibility at the core or onset of your planning and processes rather than addressing it afterward.

5A-3ii - Develop accessibility policies for maintaining accessible public spaces and services, including an accessible customer service policy.

Question 5B.

5 B. Programs or Services

What People Said:

When assessing programs or services of municipalities, the respondents said:

- Listen to people with lived experience and value their input and put these ideas into action. Lip service happens far too often. Accessibility to community spaces remains a barrier to participation. Well-defined easy access to programs [including those that have] time sensitive [registration]. We have an annual service review where levels of service are discussed, leading to budget decisions.
- Limited accessible options for neurodiverse & physical disabilities.
- Swim programs needed evenings or weekends, or you could have partners to connect with to do workouts or swimming buddies.
- At reception the only thing I would add would be space for a mobility scooter/wheelchair to wait safely and at least 2 chairs one with arms. Sofa and sofa type chairs are difficult sit and get up from.
- Create and expand public service/ program models and introduce democratic participatory planning and administration.
- Make station avenue accessible with ramps.
- Education and training for all, but for public-facing and front-counter staff.
- Teach people to recognize differences in others and react appropriately and accordingly.
- Present all options for people (paper, QR code, online, over the phone, in person, etc.).
- Have an “accessibility concierge” type of person to help out with all things accessibility.
- Networking [knowing what resources are available in the community and nearby].

Identified Barriers

a. Physical Barriers

- Accessibility to community spaces.
- Limited accessible options for neurodiverse and physically disabled individuals in municipal programs.
- Need for more space at reception areas for mobility scooters/wheelchairs and seating with proper support.
- Need for ramps and better surfacing in public spaces.

b. Communication Barriers

- Perceived lack of meaningful engagement with people with lived experience.
- The need for well-defined and easy access to time-sensitive programs.
- Inadequate presentation of service options (e.g., paper, QR code, online, phone, in-person).
- Absence of an “accessibility concierge” to assist with accessibility-related needs.

c. Systemic Barriers:

- Need to create and expand public service/program models.
- Need for accessibility considerations to be addressed during annual service reviews and budget decisions when considering new initiatives.

d. Customer Service Barriers

- Insufficient education and training for public-facing staff to recognize and appropriately respond to differences in others.

e. Digital Barriers

- Potential issues with integrating various communication tools and platforms to ensure accessibility.

Changing Paces’ Recommendations:

5B 1. Physical Solutions

5B-1i – Contact neurodiverse and physically disabled populations for input on the types of programs they’d be interested in and their needs for participation.

5B-1ii - Work towards providing sufficient space in reception areas for mobility scooters and wheelchairs and plan for strong, supportive seating.

5B 2. Communication Solutions

5B-2i - Value and leverage the lived experience of people with disabilities in the community.

5B-2ii - Once contact is made with disability organizations, develop relationships with people in communications to share information about accessible municipal programs.

5B-2iii - Include multiple avenues for people to communicate with you when sending any communication, such as phone, email, QR code, online, and in-person options.

5B-2iv - Consider appointing an “accessibility concierge” to assist the public or staff with accessibility-related needs. This person could work closely department/person responsible for Human Resources to facilitate necessary accommodations.

5B 3. Systemic Solutions

5B-3i - The involvement of people with disabilities in the community is central to the idea of “Nothing about us, without us.” Remember that “Disability inclusion is an opportunity, not an obstacle.

5B-3ii - Suggest to the department/person responsible for Human Resources that they implement a policy ensuring accessibility concerns or feedback are responded to confirming receipt within 48 hours and are addressed at the start of every service review or operations meeting.

5B 4. Customer Service Solutions

[See 4B 4. RE: Customer Service Training]

5B 5. Digital Solutions

5B-5i – Integrate and manage various communication tools and platforms can be integrated to ensure accessibility, provided a person highly competent in digital accessibility manages them.

Question 5C.

5 C. Engaging Council

What People Said:

When it comes to the Council and accessibility measures, the following were mentioned:

- It is important that Council hear people with disabilities, respond to their issues that they raise and do something about it. 'Actions speak louder than words.' Collaborating with partners such as community groups and accessibility committees is also important as they are already doing the work and have expertise that should be valued and appreciated.
- In-person opportunities to meet staff and Council are very helpful.
- Easier access to their contact info is needed.
- Sooke's Council meetings scheduled times align with work hours of residents, or when residents are stuck in the atrocious traffic back up.
- Have way if needed, for someone to sign (ASL) having a video or shows the words.
- When the receptionist is not available, the message is too long. Prefer human contact and the receptionist you have is excellent!!!! Perhaps a confirmation that the message was received or if the message has been rerouted to another department that can better answer a question or concern.
- Remove arbitrary rules that limit public input which have an especially detrimental impact on those with accessibility issues - on matters of city governance and expand opportunities for said public input.
- Teach council members to speak clearly and loudly because being deaf is an invisible disability.
- Some people, not Council, have difficulty engaging because they don't want to say wrong thing or offend (so they avoid).

Identified Barriers

a. Communication Barriers

- Need easier access to contact information for Council members and staff.
- Need for tools or support for those requiring sign language interpretation or other communication aids.
- Long or unclear automated messages when reception is unavailable, preference for human contact and confirmation messages.
- Need for Council members to speak clearly and loudly to accommodate those with hearing impairments.
- Challenges in engagement due to fear of saying the wrong thing or offending.

b. Attitudinal Barriers

- Lack of action and response from Council to issues raised by people with disabilities; need for genuine collaboration with community groups and accessibility committees.
- Rules that limit public input may disproportionately impact those with accessibility issues.
- Inadequate acknowledgment of invisible disabilities and corresponding communication needs.

c. Systemic Barriers

- Need to expand opportunities for public input and remove barriers that prevent effective participation in municipal governance.
- Limited engagement opportunities with Council and staff due to scheduling and access issues.

d. Physical Barriers

- In-person opportunities to meet staff and Council are helpful, but there may be physical barriers to accessing these opportunities if not well accommodated.
- Elevator is a challenge at Sooke Council Chambers.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

5C 1. Communication Solutions

5C-1i - Consider ensuring contact information for Council members and staff is available on the website and at the municipal office at reception, with a Braille version available upon request.

5C-1ii - If someone wants to attend and has a hearing disability, strive to offer several options. These may include investing in hearing loops, using PowerPoint to transcribe amplified audio on a screen, or booking an ASL interpreter.

5C-1iii - If possible, consider implementing an automated option that allows callers to speak directly to a person when contacting the municipality.

5C-1iv - It is suggested that at the start of every Council meeting, the person opening the meeting may ask speakers to talk clearly and articulately for the sake of those with hearing loss or those who speak English as a second language.

5C 2. Attitudinal Solutions

[See 4B RE: Customer Service Solutions, response from Council, inadequate acknowledgment of invisible disabilities]

5C 3. Systemic Solutions

5C-3i - Consider making Council members available to engage with the public outside of business hours once a month, ensuring that this schedule is widely known.

5C-3ii - Strive to allow people to give input in multiple formats, such as written, verbal, American Sign Language, Augmentative or Alternative Communication, or by proxy, to encourage greater inclusion and a variety of perspectives.

5C 4. Physical Solutions

5C-4i - If a person with a disability cannot visit the municipality, consider having a Council member arrange to meet them in person, on the phone, or electronically.

5C-4ii - Strive to ensure that all elevators in municipal buildings are maintained and functioning.

Question 5D.

5 D. Municipal Buildings and Grounds

What People Said:

For accessibility within municipal buildings and grounds, the respondents mentioned the following:

- All municipal buildings and grounds need to be universally accessible. There is a lot of work to do in this area.
- Well defined depts [departments], larger signs, well managed walkways, and easy accessing entrances.
- New Arts and Culture Gallery has a gravel parking lot.
- Make sure toilets are high enough to get off.
- Reliable Elevator.
- Colours symbols, and braille.
- Asked for a bike rack at town hall and they installed one! It works well to lock up my large adult tricycle.
- One more accessible parking space would be nice, signage to make sure parked trucks don't block the sidewalk by backing into space and taking up space on the sidewalk.

- Ensuring walk paths are in good condition and ramps and parking spots are accessible Higher toilets.
- Terrible bathroom in Langford city hall because need for key and limited keys.
- Also, can't access building except for the short time when door unlocked.
- Accessibility features aren’t included.
- Accessible parking isn’t sufficient (not enough or poorly designed spots).
- Proximity of accessible parking should be considered.
- Accesses and pathways are too narrow for mobility assistive devices.
- “I feel I am taking risks to access areas I want to go”.
- Should have signage that tells users how hard the trail is or what to expect in terms of challenges.
- Need more accessible playground equipment that prioritizes all children playing together, not just “disabled” kids in one area and “everyone else” somewhere else.
- Municipal buildings parking is not sufficient nor accessible.
- Staff need training to assist those with disabilities and different needs.
- Accessibility is often an afterthought for municipal events.

Identified Barriers

a. Physical Barriers

- All municipal buildings and grounds need to be universally accessible.
- Insufficient or poorly designed accessible parking spots; need for more spaces and better signage to prevent obstruction.
- Pathways and entrances are too narrow for mobility assistive devices.
- Gravel parking lots and walkways create accessibility challenges.
- Toilets not fully accessible
- Challenges with elevators and poorly maintained access points.
- Inadequate or inaccessible bathroom facilities with limited access.

b. Communication Barriers

- Need for clear signage, including larger signs, colors, symbols, and braille to aid navigation and understanding.
- Lack of signage indicating trail difficulty or challenges.

c. Systemic Barriers

- Accessibility features are often included as an afterthought rather than integrated into planning from the start.

- Limited training for staff to assist those with disabilities effectively.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

5D 1. Physical Solutions

[See 4C 3. RE: for details on Physical Solutions and Parking.]

[See 5A 1. RE: for information on Physical Solutions related to surfaces and other aspects.]

5D-1i - All municipal facilities would benefit from implementation of universal design principles.

5D 2. Communication Solutions

[See 5H RE: for details on Signage.]

5D-2i - Ensure clear signage, including larger signs, colors, symbols, and braille, to aid navigation and understanding.

5D 3. Systemic Solutions

[See section 4B 4. RE: for details on Customer Service solutions and training.]

5D-3i - When planning new development or major renovations, consider accessibility from the beginning. Retrofitting after the fact will be far more costly than incorporating accessibility features from the start.

Question 5E.

5 E. Bylaws or Policies

What People Said:

As for accessibility in the municipalities' bylaws or policies, the respondents noted these:

- Accessible parking violators need to be fined and this needs to be enforced. Not happening currently and limited to no parking for accessible vans/Handy Dart/ facility day program vans/buses. Limited to no policy info ever seen re: accommodations/inclusiveness.
- Plain language materials are important.
- Old bylaws and policies and not regularly enforced.

- One size does not fit all & there should be opportunities to apply alternative.
- Late entrance of [residents with] lived experience to the committee process.
- I would like to see bylaws implemented for accessibility and safety for all new commercial buildings/including restaurants, cafes. Would like to see Traffic Impact Assessments address accessibility and safety measures as population increases and that they become part of the development permit process and transparent to the public.
- On leash / Off leash bylaws. Have safe areas where dogs must be on leash.
- Other people's lack of awareness means challenges for people with vision issues or mobility, tree branches or car mirrors if sidewalk blocked for example.
- Encourage diversity

Identified Barriers

a. Policy-Related Barriers

- Old bylaws and policies are not regularly enforced; need for updated policies on accommodations and inclusiveness.
- Lack of policy information on accommodations and inclusiveness.

b. Communication Barriers

- Plain language materials are important but not consistently provided.
- Late inclusion of lived experience in the committee process.
- Lack of awareness among the public about accessibility needs and inclusive practices.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

5E 1. Policy-Related Solutions

5E-1i - Whenever possible, strive to exceed minimum standards for the number of accessible parking spaces.

5E-1ii - Municipalities are encouraged to review and update all organizational policies to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness are integrated throughout. HR policies should include a variety of accommodation opportunities for employees with disabilities.

5E 2. Communication Solutions

5E-2i - Bylaws and policies should be written in plain language as much as possible.

5E-2ii - Build public awareness of accessibility needs and inclusive practices by incorporating accessibility into all public gatherings and events.

Question 5F.

5 F. Municipal Staff

What People Said:

For municipal staff, the respondents said:

- Some municipal staff are fantastic and some rude and disrespectful. More awareness training and 'hands on' learning experiences need to happen regularly not just once and 'tick the box.'
- Education programs and walk through sessions pointing out the barriers.
- Provide communication training for staff when engaging with neuro diverse populations.
- Shorter message when receptionist is not available to ensure that those with disabilities such as auditory, memory loss do not have to hang up and repeat the call. Human contact is preferred.
- Respectful workplace culture is needed.
- Provide a front counter customer service agent.
- Pay attention to meeting times – Council meeting times are hard.
- Education and training for all, but for public facing and front counter staff.
- Teach people to recognize differences in others and react appropriately and accordingly.
- Say your name to people with a vision issue.
- People skills training, disability awareness and accessibility and inclusion training
- Training for inclusivity, patience, respect.
- Provide tools to help; many are not costly (for example, a signature guide by the cash register, fold where you need the person to sign a document).
- Share information.
- Ask the person if they need assistance (do not just “take over” and help).
- Ask the person if they need assistance each time they come in as the situation could vary from day to day.
- Ensure the conversation is with the customer and not the person that may be assisting them.
- People with disabilities often feel like an afterthought when municipal staff create events or processes.
- When past experiences are negative, people find it hard to keep trying and showing up again and again to be disappointed or treated poorly.
- Staff need to show that people with disabilities are welcomed and embraced.
- People need explanation when told no by staff regarding proposed accessibility improvements.
- Mail in voting is an accessible option.
- Be kind.
- Organization wide, people need more training.

- Ask people every time they come in if they need assistance. Just because they say yes or no one time, they may not the next time.
- Speak directly to the person and not their assistance person.
- Purchase a signing guide for people to use.
- Look for inexpensive additions and retrofits that can be available at the counter for people to use (magnifying glasses, screens).
- Customer service should be seen as public service.
- Service delivery should be broadened.
- Organization wide training.
- Go out to the people, don't make them come to you.
- Lack of resources.
- Broad staff training is needed to assess the needs of the people you serve.
- Improve recreational facilities so people using it can be independent.
- Train staff to be calm, use plain language, give space and time for those to come up with answers.
- Be mindful of attitudinal barriers and facial expressions.
- Don't speak for those with disabilities.

Identified Barriers

a. Communication Barriers

- Lack of proper communication between staff and customers, such as not speaking directly to the customer.
- Automated messages or answering services used when front counter staff are unavailable are too lengthy, creating difficulties for those with auditory or memory issues.
- Staff would benefit from more training in communication with neurodiverse populations.

b. Customer Service Barriers

- Inconsistent treatment and inclusivity from some municipal staff, including instances of intolerance and disrespect.
- Perceived lack of a respectful workplace culture and failure to recognize and address the needs of people with disabilities.
- Negative past experiences lead to reluctance to engage with municipal services.
- Insufficient training for staff on disability awareness and accessibility, with a lack of practical, real-life scenario-based education.

c. Systemic Barriers

- Inadequate organization-wide training on disability awareness and inclusivity.

- Lack of regular, hands-on education programs for staff to address accessibility barriers.
- Service delivery needs to be consistently aligned with the following principles of public service:
  Dignity;
  Independence;
  Inclusion;
  Equal Opportunity.

d. Policy-Related Barriers

- Insufficient policies and practices to address the needs of people with disabilities, including the absence of front-counter customer service agents.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

5F 1. Communication Solution

[See 4B RE: Customer Service Solutions and training]

[See 5B RE: Physical Solutions and Neurodiversity]

5F-1i - Municipalities are encouraged to ensure their phone systems include an option for callers to speak to someone live. This does not require a full-time receptionist but rather a system that allows calls to be directed to an available staff member already at their desk.

5F 2. Customer Service Solutions

[See 4B RE: Customer Service Solutions and customer service training]

5F 3. Systemic Solutions

[See 4B RE: Customer Service Solutions and customer service training]

5F 4. Policy-Related Barriers

[See 5F RE: Municipal Staff and Communication Solution]

Question 5G.

5 G. Municipal Events

What People Said:

For municipal events, the respondents said:

- Welcoming, universally accessible location with at least 2 weeks' notice so that persons with disabilities can book transportation and arrange caregivers with lots of promotion where people feel valued will result in more attendance and participation.
- Many events not fully accessible and usually the committee members putting on the events there is no one with a disability pointing out the possible barriers.
- ‘Quiet spaces,’ ‘sensory safe spaces’, accessible parking and election advance poll.
- Sometimes transportation to get to the event or feeling lonely at the event.
- Increase Accessible Parking/Identify if Event is Accessibility Friendly on Posters and Website/Wheelchair or Mobility Scooter able to navigate site ground.
- Beach access can be difficult because of the terrain.
- Accessibility parking.
- Make everyone feel welcome at the start, not an afterthought, priority parking for people with needs.
- Encourage developers and stakeholders to consider accessibility in all municipal projects.
- Include accessibility requirements in project guidelines and review processes and consult with accessibility experts during planning stages.
- Consider disabilities in community planning to create an inclusive environment.
- Engage with disability advocacy groups during the planning process and conduct accessibility audits of public spaces.
- Ensure all engagement events are accessible to everyone.
- Adjust the height of boards, provide alternative ways to participate (e.g., digital sticky notes), and ensure venues are physically accessible.
- Improve access to meetings for those who cannot attend physically or lack remote technology.
- Offer hybrid meeting options, provide necessary technology, or support, and ensure meeting materials are accessible in various formats.

Identified Barriers

a. Communication Barriers

- Event information and promotional materials lack clear indicators of accessibility features, making it difficult for people to know if an event is accessible.
- Event details are not always communicated far enough in advance, hindering planning for transportation and caregiver arrangements.

b. Physical Barriers

- Many events are not fully accessible, with inadequate provisions for people with disabilities.
- Lack of "quiet spaces" or "sensory safe spaces" at events.
- Inadequate accessible parking and difficulty navigating event grounds with wheelchairs or mobility scooters.
- Beach access and other event locations are challenging due to terrain issues.

c. Systemic Barriers

- Lack of consistency in applying accessibility requirements across all city projects and events.
- Perceived insufficient engagement with disability advocacy groups during the municipal event planning process.

d. Policy-Related Barriers

- Perceived lack of accessibility considerations in project guidelines or review processes.
- No clear policies or practices to ensure all engagement events are accessible to everyone.

e. Customer Service Barriers

- Perceived lack of training or awareness on accessibility needs and inclusive planning.
- Need for improved education on creating universally accessible and welcoming environments for all attendees.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

5G 1. Communication Solutions

5G-1i - Event promotion would be more effective for people with disabilities if promotional materials included accessibility information.

5G-1ii – Where possible, event promotion should begin three to four weeks before to allow time for arranging transportation and caregivers.

5G 2. Physical Solutions

5G-2i - Engage with disability advocacy groups during new municipal initiative planning processes and conduct accessibility audits of public spaces.

5G-2ii - Empower the disability community to help plan and volunteer to support attendees with disabilities.

5G-2iii - Offering a “quiet tent” is an option for individuals needing a safe decompression space. It should be in a low-noise area with minimal stimuli.

5G-2iv - Plan for more accessible spaces than anticipated. Post signage indicating accessible parking from the road to the parking spaces.

5G-2v - If an event is held where the terrain changes, plan a path on an easy-to-navigate surface for people using mobility devices.

5G 3. Systemic Solutions

5G-3i. - Recommend that the CWAAC develop a checklist of accessibility requirements and considerations for municipal events or projects and a policy for its use. When planning accommodations, including a committee member with lived experience is best.

5G 4. Policy-Related Solutions

[See above RE: checklist]

[See above RE: policy]

5G 5. Customer Service Solutions

5G-5i - Event organizers would benefit from having refresher training on disability awareness. Volunteers should also receive training on accommodating people with disabilities prior to the event.

Question 5H.

5 H. Signage/Wayfinding

What People Said:

For accessibility issues with signage/wayfinding, these were mentioned:

- More attention to what barriers for persons with disabilities is and fixing these in the budget.
- Braille and large print options are useful.
- Confusing signage, small print unrecognizable symbols.
- Have recorded options that people can play aloud. Braille signage.
- Contrast large print.
- It's nice to see First Nations names and words on signage.

- Would like to see a signage/wayfinding map on website that specifically lists/shows accessible information such as parking (number of spots), accessible public bathrooms, accessible outdoor seating or quiet spots that would help someone plan their way around.
- Signage for trails on ability level.
- Color contrast is helpful; larger font - maximize the space on a sign, or on online seminar slides/presentations, use simple fonts.
- Easier to read, sometimes too much information.
- Ensure entrance welcoming, bright, well-signed, good power door openers.
- Take a different approach if first approach isn't working.
- Offer text, email, interpreter services, and staff trained in sign language and other languages.
- More signage is needed.
- Galloping Goose Trail: Improve signage and reduce speeds of bikes and scooters on the trail. Work with the CRD to install clear signage and enforce speed limits.

Identified Barriers

a. Communication Barriers

- Signage options do not include recorded options and Braille.
- Website signage/wayfinding maps should include accessible information such as parking spots, public bathrooms, and outdoor seating.

b. Physical Barriers

- Confusing signage with small print and unrecognizable symbols makes navigation difficult.
- Lack of color contrast and large print on signs affects readability.
- Signs and entrances need to be welcoming, well-signed, and equipped with power door openers.

c. Systemic Barriers

- Signage needs to be considered for accessibility features.
- Improvement and maintenance of signage, including trail signs.

d. Policy-Related Barriers

- Need for policies ensuring signage includes accessible formats and adequate wayfinding information.
- Inconsistent application of accessibility standards in signage and wayfinding systems.

e. Customer Service Barriers

- Need for effective signage practices and accessible wayfinding solutions.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

5H 1. Communication Solutions

5H-1i - Signage options should include recorded formats and Braille to ensure information is accessible to everyone.

5H-1ii - Website signage and wayfinding maps could include accessible information such as parking spots, public bathrooms, and outdoor seating.

5H 2. Physical Solutions

5H-2i - All signage should use large print, high-contrast colors between text and background, and Braille wherever possible.

5H 3. Systemic Solutions

5H-3i - Consider the accessibility of municipal signage during the onset of budgeting to save significantly in the long run.

5H 4. Policy-Related Solutions

5H-4i - All municipalities should consider policies regarding signage based on the information above.

5H-4ii - Aim to consistently apply the established accessible policies and standards in all signage and wayfinding systems.

5H 5. Customer Service Solutions

5H-5i - Staff may consult with external organizations that specialize in disability solutions such as the Rick Hansen Foundation, to learn effective signage practices and accessible wayfinding solutions.

Question 5I.

5 I. Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Bike lanes

What People Said:

For Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Bike lanes accessibility issues, here are some of the respondents' concerns:

- Bus stop.
- Cross walks with signal lights though I realize that several of the busy roads in the area are under Provincial, not local, jurisdiction.
- Maybe provide crossing guards at intersections.
- Cars are the largest danger to me.
- Speed limits should be reduced to 30 km/hour.
- Crosswalks with signal lights.
- Advocacy with the province to improve pedestrian safety on HWY 14.
- Otter point road crossing near the legion is unsafe.
- Crosswalks need to have more time to cross.
- Integrate accessibility into all committees.
- All the focus and budget spent on new and improvements to bike lanes. Not enough attention and budget spent on improving people of all ages and abilities being able to get around their communities and other communities as well.
- Some streets have no sidewalks or have sidewalks that go to gravel, not suitable for wheelchairs (e.g. at Grant and Otter Point Road).
- Evenly paved walkways, wider sidewalks even level walkways without barriers i.e. garbage cans, flowerpots, short light wait times.
- Standard treatment of surfaces, curbs, signs, lighting.
- Speed[ing] is a problem.
- Lack of sidewalks, uncontrolled sidewalks need lights.
- More sidewalks uneven, not maintained powers quick timers on walk signs, maintenance during motor vehicles on sidewalks snow on corners and sidewalks.
- A crosswalk from Pelican Drive in Colwood to Duke Road in Metchosin. This is a municipal boundary, crossing a fast-moving arterial road. Two municipalities would have to join to provide a link between Latoria Creek Park and surrounding neighborhoods to access the waterfront.
- Signal lights at crosswalks on main roads. Perhaps consider crossing guards during busy traffic times.
- Wider sidewalks allow mobility devices and bikes not to crowd people on foot.
- Sidewalks cleared as soon as possible to allow people with disabilities to get to work safely and without having to leave home 15-20 mins later to get to an appointment or bus stop. Fall leaves and spring cherry blossoms need to be cleared along sidewalks as they are easy to slip on.
- Focus on improving intersections on major roads to provide more space for wheelchairs and mobility devices at crossings and pedestrian safety islands/corner safety islands. Maintain minimum 2m wide sidewalk width standard to help provide accessibility and comfort to those

using wheelchairs and mobility devices.
- Not all sidewalks are up to new accessible standards (less than 1.2m wide) Not enough space on the island when waiting to cross or steep drops.
- Galloping Goose speed limit.
- Reduce speed maximums on trails.
- Hearing e-bikes/scooters is an issue. Ideally, they would be more audible.
- Pavers uneven, tripping hazard.
- Make more even transitions to road - not raised.
- Make sure snow removal isn't blocking access.

Identified Barriers

a. Physical Barriers

- Uneven sidewalks, including transitions to gravel, pose accessibility challenges.
- Sidewalks and crosswalks may lack sufficient width, making it difficult for mobility devices to navigate.
- Pavers and surfaces can be uneven, creating tripping hazards.
- Insufficient space on pedestrian safety islands and steep drops at crossings impedes accessibility.

b. Communication Barriers

- Information about accessibility features at crosswalks and sidewalks is often not clearly communicated.

c. Policy-Related Barriers

- Inconsistent attention and budget allocation between bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure hinder overall accessibility improvements.
- Lack of standardized treatment for sidewalk surfaces, curbs, and lighting affects navigation.
- Speed limits and traffic controls, such as the absence of crossing guards or reduced speed zones, contribute to pedestrian safety issues.

d. Systemic Barriers

- Not all sidewalks meet new accessibility standards.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

5l 1. Physical Solutions

5I-1i - Strive to update sidewalks, ensuring they are wide enough for electronic mobility devices and that smooth transitions occur where the sidewalk ends.

5I 2. Communication Solutions

5I-2i – Consider allowing longer crossing times at crosswalk signal lights as a simple accommodation that benefits all pedestrians.

5I-2ii - Strive to incorporate top-of-the-line crosswalk features, including audio signals and clear signage. Consistency between municipalities could be beneficial.

5I 3. Policy-Related Solutions

5I-3i - Incorporating accessibility considerations at the baseline of every budget meeting for infrastructure helps municipalities avoid costly retrofits for bike lanes, sidewalks, curbs, and lighting.

5I 4. Systemic Solutions

5I-4i.- Strive to meet accessibility standards for all new sidewalks.

5 J. Additional Information Please

The following were just additional notes:

- Snow clearing and put all the snow in the 2 disability parking spots.
- Mail in ballot.
- Elections need work so voting is easier.
- Advance voting should have accessibility line as in avoid the long wait, identify /make more accessible priority parking.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

5J-i - Snow ploughing or placement in accessible parking spaces makes them unusable.

5J-ii - Offering alternative voting methods to ensure inclusivity for the public

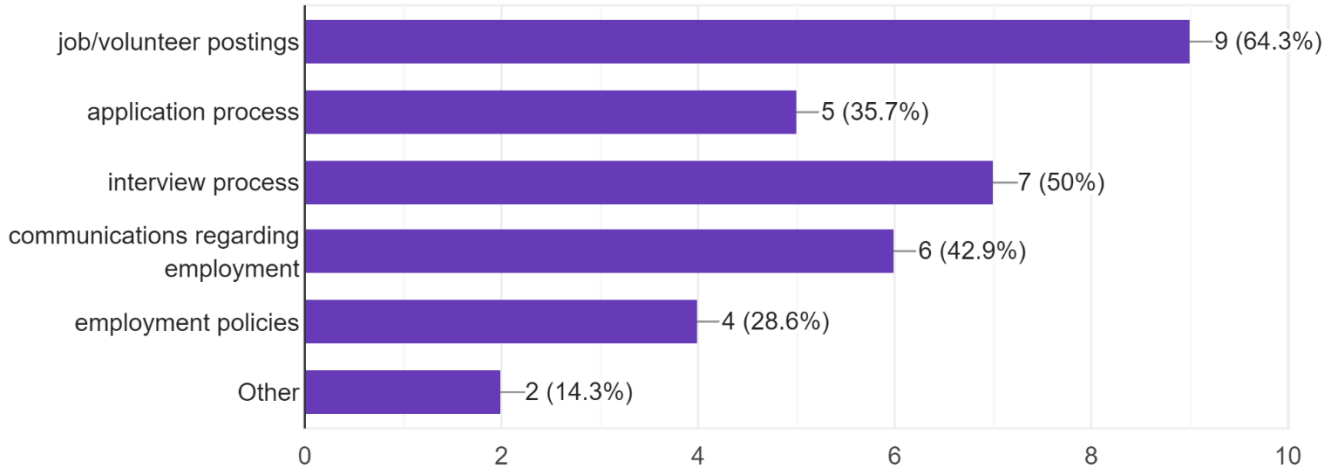
5J-iii - On voting days, consider accessibility needs such as chairs and empty spaces for mobility devices to accommodate all voters effectively.

5J-iv - On each voting day, aim to provide extra accessible parking to ensure sufficient space for voters with disabilities.

Question 6A

6A. Where do you (or the person you are assisting) experience barriers when applying for jobs or volunteer positions with your local government?

14 responses



64.3% - job/volunteer postings

35.7% - application process

50% - interview process

42.9% - communications regarding employment

28.6% - employment policies

14.3% - Other

What People Said:

When it comes to barriers with job application or volunteer positions, most respondents had difficulty or needed help with job/volunteer postings over the other 5 choices

Question 6B.

6 B. If you (or the person you are assisting) indicated experience with a barrier when accessing municipal employment and volunteer opportunities in part one of this question, please provide specific details below.

What People Said:

When accessing municipal employment and volunteer opportunities, the following were noted:

- A lot of work needs to be done in this area. Not much accommodation/equity and volunteers not always valued.
- Job descriptions are inadequate and often have way too much listed as requirements.
- Interview process focuses too much on talking and discussion. Creativity is needed in this process to allow people to shine in other ways.
- Not clear process on how picked, how hired, time limit for process.
- Maybe work with agencies support people with employment like community living in Victoria, lifetime networks to find ways to support that person or trained staff to be able to work with that person.
- Retired and can only make suggestions that bring attention to the interview process.

Identified Barriers

- **Systemic Barriers**
    - Unclear hiring processes, including ambiguous criteria and timelines.
- **Attitudinal Barriers**
    - Negative perceptions about hiring individuals with disabilities, leading to discriminatory practices.
    - Volunteers with disabilities are not always valued or recognized appropriately.
- **Communication Barriers**
- Job postings lack inclusivity, such as not providing alt text for photos.\
- **Digital Barriers**
    - Poor acoustics in committee or Council rooms create challenges for individuals with hearing impairments.
- **Customer Service Barriers**
    - Need for better support tools and training for staff working with individuals with disabilities.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

6B 1. Systemic Solutions

6B-1i - Include contact information in the job postings clearly stating that assistance is available if required to apply for the job.

6B 2. Attitudinal Solutions

6B-2i - Customer service training helps dispel stereotypes and stigma surrounding hiring individuals with disabilities.

6B-2ii – Involving volunteers with disabilities in municipal roles will provide valuable insights and unique perspectives and possibly lead to a reliable source of future employees.

6B 3. Communication Solutions

6B-3i - Make job postings accessible and be willing to accommodate various needs in the hiring process.

6B 4. Digital Solutions

6B-4i - Equip Council rooms with microphones and provide speakers amplifying sound to enhance accessibility. Consider playing PowerPoint presentations in the background to ensure that the text on the screen is captured effectively.

6B 5. Customer Service Solutions

6B-5i - Customer service training is recommended to ensure that staff can effectively support all individuals, including those with disabilities

Question 6C.

6 C. If you (or the person you are assisting) indicated experience with a barrier when accessing municipal employment and volunteer opportunities in part one of this question, please share any ideas you might have on how to reduce or eliminate that barrier.

What People Said:

For addressing barriers when accessing municipal employment and volunteer opportunities, the respondents suggested the following:

- Where possible, include ‘wheelchair’ symbols on application forms/job ads to indicate that the position would be suitable for a person with disabilities.

- Note that ‘accommodation available’ is near the top of the job ad as opposed to the bottom of the ad.
- Include the level of effort required for the position in the job ad.
- List specifically: ‘Available accommodation might include…’ in the job ad.
- Interview processes could be made more inclusive and provide a more stress-free process if interview questions were provided in advance allowing people to have time to think about the questions and respond in a meaningful way.
- Make sure that the reception area is clear, the receptionist is at the desk to greet applicants and can help applicants in the waiting area if required. Ensure the path to the interview room and interview room can be navigated easily, chairs w/without arms if needed. Identify washroom area. Make sure to walk back with the applicant to reception.
- Realize that panel interviews can be more stressful than one on one.
- Overcome language barriers at service counters.
- Increase representation of youth and seniors in volunteer and employment opportunities.
- Allow demonstrative interviews (perform a task).
- Education and training for interviewers, panels, recruiters and general employees to assess and remove personal bias in the process (i.e. ‘People with disabilities can't do _____’, ‘This person has _____. They can't do this job/they won't be an effective team member.’
- Develop working partnerships with organizations that place those looking for work. You can find talent looking for you.

Identified Barriers

- **Communication Barriers**
    - Language barriers at service counters.
    - Not having access to interview questions in advance causes stress and impedes thoughtful responses.
    - Perceived lack of awareness about the stress of panel interviews and the importance of accommodating various needs.

- **Physical Barriers**
    - Reception area and interview room are not always accessible or easy to navigate.
    - Absence of clear paths, lowered service counters, appropriate chair options, and identified washroom locations.

- **Customer Service Barriers**
    - Lack of staff assistance to applicants in the waiting area and exiting after the interview.

- **Systemic Barriers**
    - Perceived lack of diverse representation (youth and seniors) in volunteer and employment opportunities.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

6C 1. Communication Solutions

6C-1i - If you know the languages commonly spoken by the public in your municipality, consider using a translation app or tool to assist staff in communications at service counters.

6C-1ii - If interviews require multiple participants, try to accommodate requests to break them into one-on-one sessions to facilitate more effective communication.

6C 2. Physical Solutions

6C-2i - Ideally, provide an accessible reception area, with a lowered service counter and interview room with clear paths, appropriate chair options, and easily identifiable accessible washroom locations to ensure easy navigation.

6C 3. Customer Service Solutions

6C-3i - Have a receptionist or staff person assist applicants in the waiting area and guide them back after the interview.

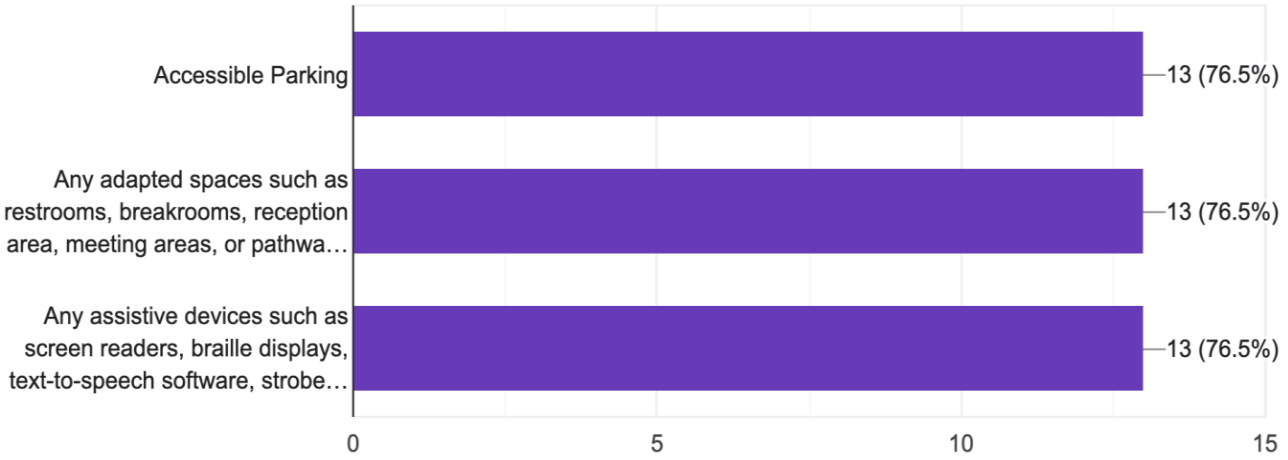
6C 4. Systemic Solutions

6C-4i - Embrace diversity to drive innovation by including youth and seniors with disabilities in volunteer and employment opportunities, helping municipalities stay connected to their communities

Question 7A.

7A. What supports are important to you (or the person you are assisting) when working or looking for a job? (Select all that apply)

17 responses



76.5% - Accessible Parking

76.5% - Any adapted spaces such as restrooms, breakrooms, reception area, meeting areas, or pathways.

76.5% - Any assistive devices such as screen readers, braille displays, text-to-speech software, strobe light/visual smoke alarms, or hearing loops.

What People Said:

- Provide accessible parking for both staff and the public.
- Designate accessible parking spaces close to entrances and ensure they are well-marked
- Design office layouts to maximize natural light and views of outdoor spaces.
- Reduce noise levels to improve concentration and reduce fatigue.
- Use soundproofing materials and create quiet zones.
- Reduce noise and improve concentration with private workspaces.
- Provide cubicles or closed offices for employees who need them.
- Ensure employees have a consistent and personalized workspace.
- Assign permanent desks and ensure setups remain unchanged.
- Have small tools and devices available for both members of the public and staff to use.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

7A 1. Physical Solutions

7A-1i: Strive to exceed the provincial minimum requirements for accessible parking spaces in municipal parking lots. If possible, provide signage on a pole as well as on the ground to signify the designation of accessible parking spaces.

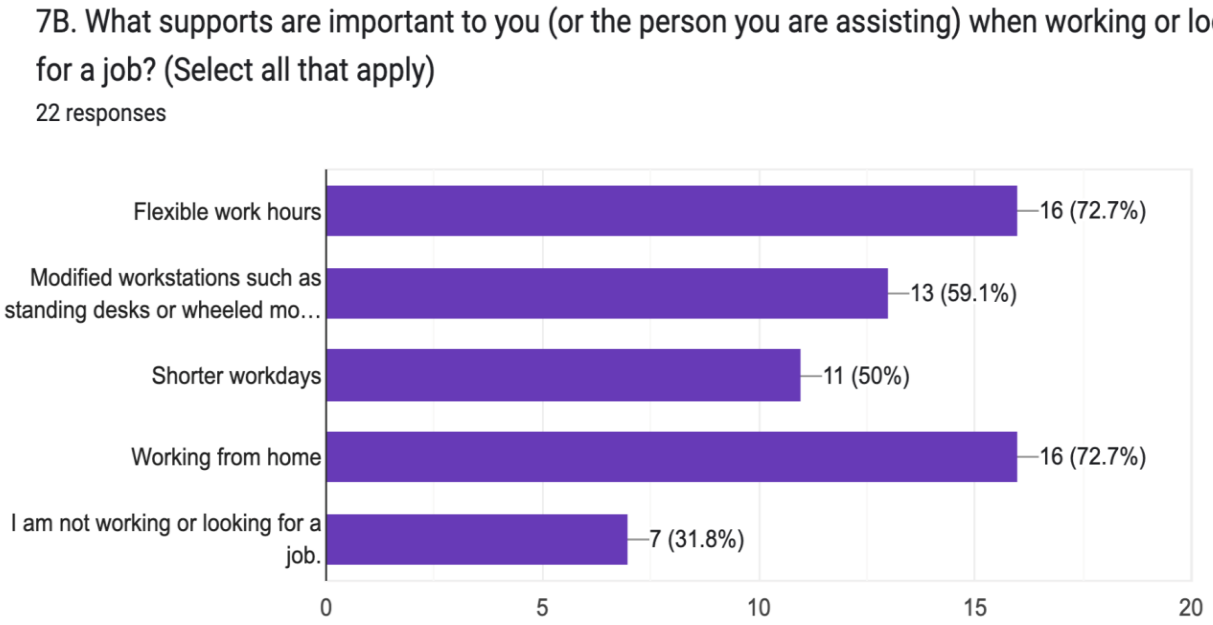
7A-1ii: Consider allowing employees to personalize their workspace as it may reduce anxiety and provide comfort, leading to higher rates of productivity.

7A-1iii: If a private office is not an option, consider providing noise-canceling headphones as an affordable accommodation for employees needing reduced noise.

7A 2. Environmental Solutions

7A-2ii: Noise-canceling headphones could be a cost-effective accommodation for employees who are bothered by high noise levels, as they often help improve concentration and reduce fatigue.

Question 7B.



72.7% - Flexible work hours

59.1% - Modified workstations such as standing desks or wheeled mobility device-adaptive desks.

50% - Shorter workdays

72.7% - Working from home

31.8% - I am not working or looking for a job.

What People Said:

Out of all the choices when it comes to the ideal work environment or when looking for a job, “flexible work hours” and “working from home” were the two most desired.

Moreover, the following are anecdotes that relate to the topic:

- Provide flexible hours or a split shift option.
- Offer extended hours or flexible scheduling for public services.
- Customize workstations to meet individual needs.
- Provide ergonomic assessments and necessary adjustments, such as standing desks or specialized equipment.
- Chair with pullout for legs/adaptable workspace.
- Need training on voice to text.
- Lighting accommodation.
- Customizable desks.
- More space.
- Sound sensitive areas.
- More flexibility in hours.
- Work from home.
- Ideally, a workplace should be compassionate and provide a flexible culture.
- Accommodation should be normalized.

Changing Paces’ Recommendations:

7B 1. Employment Solutions

7B-1i: Consider offering flexible scheduling options, such as split shifts, limited extended hours, and work-from-home options, to accommodate the diverse needs of municipal workers, including those with disabilities. This flexibility could greatly benefit both the public and all municipal employees. People with disabilities, like everyone else, have appointments and other responsibilities that could be managed more effectively with flexible scheduling.

7B 2. Physical Solutions

7B-2i: Strive to invest time and resources in customizing workstations for employees with disabilities. Taking the necessary steps to ensure comfort and accessibility in the workplace can lead to increased productivity. When selecting products like chairs and

desks, please consider brands and items that the individual already knows work well for their body, ensuring that the accommodations are truly effective.

Question 7C.

7 C. What supports are important to you (or the person you are assisting) when working or looking for a job?

What People Said:

When working or looking for a job, respondents need support with the following:

- All the above and others not mentioned above such as mentoring, job sharing, funding for workplace modifications, ergonomic desks, back supports etc.
- Psychological safety (related to attitudinal barriers), recognition of intersectionality (e.g., having a disability and other identity, such as being an immigrant) and its impact on policies and practices, non-bureaucratic process of securing accommodations.
- The employer should be equal opportunity employer.
- Ready accommodations or openness to.
- Flexible hours, work from home.
- Working interviews- do away with rigid outdated interview processes.
- Partnerships with union representatives to develop job descriptions that reflect more flexibility in hours worked.
- Inclusion and adaptability.
- Opportunity to work from home, accessible parking, if in office own workspace.
- To feel a part of team and making friendships.
- I liked being able to work from home as a writer, with flexible work hours as long as I got the project done.
- Accessible break rooms/kitchens with toasters/coffee makers etc. easy to access, including sink and paper towels. Flexible dress code.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

7C 1. Communication Solutions

7C-1i - Ensure that accommodations discussed during the hiring process are carried over into the workplace through contracts or written agreements with specifics, where possible.

7C-1ii - Strive for a more interviewee-centered approach by being flexible and prepared to move beyond traditional formalities. Focus on questions directly related to the job to assess fit and needs better.

7C 2. Physical Solutions

7C-2i - Aim to accommodate individual body types by considering ergonomic workplace modifications such as adjustable desks, back supports, and accessible break rooms. Be open to a variety of solutions, which may be informed by the lived experiences of people with disabilities.

7C-2ii - Consider flexible work schedules, such as hybrid home/office arrangements to better accommodate diverse needs.

7C-2iii - Incorporate accessibility in to break rooms so that amenities like toasters, coffee makers, and sinks are within reach. Be open to making case-by-case adjustments and discussing needs.

7C-2iv - Strive to keep office equipment such as printers in accessible locations and provide both private and collaborative workspaces when possible.

7C 3. Customer Service Solutions

7C-3i - Consider implementing a program for individuals with disabilities paired with mentoring or job-sharing opportunities. This may allow individuals to settle in and adjust their accommodations as needed.

7C-3ii - Strive to partner with union representatives and be open to developing job descriptions that include an offer of support if help is needed to apply.

7C-3iii - Be willing to provide accommodations and explore various solutions, which may foster a more inclusive workplace culture and allow individuals to contribute their own solutions, such as personal computers and adaptive technology.

7C 4. Systemic Solutions

7C-4i - Consider including people with disabilities at various organizational levels and giving them influence over developing policies and practices. This approach may more effectively integrate individuals into the municipal work culture.

7C-4ii - Strive for simplified or streamlined processes to discuss and secure accommodations promptly.

7C 5. Attitudinal Solutions

7C-5i - Strive for comprehensive customer service training.

7C-5ii - Be open to multiple ways of achieving solutions and working styles. This flexibility

may accommodate diverse learning and working preferences and enhance overall workplace inclusivity.

Question 8.

8. Please list the top 3 accessibility improvements, in ANY area you (or the person you are assisting) want to see your municipality or the municipality you visit make:

What People Said:

For the respondents, the top three accessibility improvements that need attention are:

- Universally accessible municipal halls, functional and accessible parking that accommodates not just cars but accessible vans, more hiring of people with lived experience for accessibility work, general access emails need to be replied to, followed up on.
- Accessibility for getting to municipal buildings and everts), accessibility to municipal policies and information and accessibility to recreation activities.
- Easy access, many rest spots, accessible facilities within the buildings.
- Sidewalks, continuing consistently.
- Enough accessible parking.
- Inclusive outdoor spaces, including playgrounds, parks, and beaches.
- Ample accessibility parking spots.

- Hiring of people with intellectual disabilities, neurodiversity, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders - employment is for all, go door-to-door to engage with residents, increased bus and Handy Dart options.
- Maintenance, universal design, accommodation.
- Higher toilets with grab rail in all bathrooms.
- More toilets in public spaces.
- Education and awareness.
- Bike lanes would encourage faster moving bikes to move from trails onto the roadways, a trail rating system, like ski hills and bike trails.
- Crosswalks, sidewalks and wider parking spaces to ease access in and out of vehicles.
- Work from home is a useful improvement for lots of workers! Flexible work hours at home or at the worksite are also a good improvement. Also, Bus Stops that let buses use their ramps.
- Visual recognition on the City Website that Langford is an inclusive environment. That the wheelchair sign is not a stigma and can be visible on seating and is in fact a relief to some people with disabilities coming to City Hall.
- Improved intersection for pedestrian / mobility devices user safety and comfort.
- Expanded sidewalk network - min 2m width.
- Improved trails with better signage to aid those with disabilities.

- Sick days for mental health.
- Sidewalk improvements.
- Bus stop upgrades.
- Parks/Trails upgrades.
- Parks accessibility, communication tools, better working environments to be more inclusive.
- Trail signage walkways, more accessible play equipment.
- Better on leash bylaw. Beach accessibility.
- Closed office/cubicles to limit office noise.
- Closed captioning (live and recorded).
- Auditory changes to committee / Council rooms.
- More paved trails, better street lighting, more public washrooms.
- Accessibility for wheelchairs/walkers.
- Use fine grained gravels on trails, walkways.
- Flexibility in work hours, schedules.
- Society's awareness as to what diversity is.
- Willingness to act once you know.
- Individualization / customizable spaces.
- Emergency plan that works for all.
- Website optics need to feel inclusive.

Identified Barriers

a. Physical Barriers

- Insufficient accessible parking for vans and cars.
- Inconsistent sidewalks; some go to gravel, not suitable for wheelchairs.
- Lack of accessible facilities in municipal buildings (e.g., higher toilets, more public washrooms).
- Sidewalks and crosswalks need improvement for width, maintenance, and accessibility.
- Inadequate or unclear access to municipal buildings and events.
- Infrastructure that does not adequately consider universal accessibility.
- Limited accessibility in recreational areas, including trails and beach access.
- Insufficient improvements in outdoor recreational facilities to support accessibility.

b. Communication Barriers

- Lack of responsiveness and follow-up on general access emails.

c. Employment Barriers

- Limited accommodation and flexibility in job descriptions and hiring practices.

- Outdated interview processes and lack of inclusivity in employment practices.
- Perceived inadequate support and accommodations for employees with disabilities (e.g., ergonomic adjustments, flexible work arrangements).
- Lack of ready and effective accommodations or modifications in the workplace.
- Insufficient support for people with intellectual disabilities.

d. Attitudinal Barriers

- Insufficient efforts to promote an inclusive environment and address societal stigma around disabilities.

Changing Paces' Recommendations:

8 1. Physical Solutions

i - Strive to exceed the provincial minimum requirement for accessible parking spots, ensuring that these spots are on level ground and kept open during special events.

8-1 ii - Aim to ensure smooth transition points and adequate width of sidewalks.

8-2 iii - Consider providing a raised toilet seat in public washrooms as an inexpensive way to enhance accessibility.

8-1 iv - Work towards incorporating accessibility into all future planning, development, and maintenance of sidewalks and crosswalks. It could be beneficial to include input from individuals who use mobility devices in the planning process.

8-1 v - To improve accessibility, strive for large, clear signage, and consider having a welcoming person guide attendees at municipal events.

8-1 vi - To work towards a fully accessible future, consider accessibility from the initial stages of infrastructure planning and include it in every stage of development.

8-1 vii - Aim to create more accessible recreational areas, both indoor and outdoor, including trails and beach access.

8 2. Communication Solutions

[See 4B RE: Digital Solutions websites]

8-2 i - Consider improving the follow-up on general access emails to ensure timely responses.

8-2 ii - Consider using talk and convert dictionary apps to assist with overcoming language

barriers at service counters.

8 3. Employment Solutions

[See 7C RE: Physical Solutions employment supports]

[See 4B RE: Customer Service training support for people with intellectual disabilities.]

8 4. Attitudinal Solutions

[See 4B RE: Customer Service training, societal stigma, mental health]

Conclusion

While municipalities have clearly made strides in accessibility, there remains an exciting opportunity to further enhance the experiences of people with disabilities and the community as a whole. The challenge of designing user-friendly products, services, vehicles, and environments for people with disabilities is significant. Historically, this has led to accessibility being addressed later in the process. However, with the Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA) now placing accessibility at the forefront, the Capital West AAC is in a strong position to recommend meaningful action for their respective Council's and municipalities' consideration.

The survey results clearly highlight the immense value that municipalities could gain by embedding an accessible mindset from the earliest stages of planning—whether for projects, policies, or events—and carrying this commitment through to completion. This approach is best realized through collaboration with disability consultants, who bring crucial expertise and insights to ensure that accessibility is thoughtfully integrated into every aspect.

Additionally, the survey underscored a need for regular Customer Service Training, which is typically conducted every two to three years. There are a number of organizations that are well-prepared to deliver this training. By adopting a forward-thinking approach and achieving tangible short-term goals, municipalities can create environments that are not only accessible but also empowering for everyone.

While addressing physical, communication, systemic, or technological barriers can be complex, the power to transform attitudinal barriers lies within each of us. By fostering empathy and embracing kindness, we can create an inclusive culture that extends beyond meeting minimums established through regulations. True accessibility is about building a community where everyone feels valued and supported.

The initial focus of the Accessibility Plans for the Capital West AAC member municipalities is on service delivery and employment, but the committee is laying the groundwork for addressing other accessibility

themes in the future. This demonstrates a commitment to ongoing improvement and expansion of accessibility initiatives.

The Capital West AAC has several opportunities to lead in advancing accessibility:

- Developing comprehensive, multi-municipal accessibility plans.
- Creating standardized accessibility guidelines that can be adopted across jurisdictions.
- Serving as a model for inter-municipal collaboration on accessibility issues.
- Driving innovation in accessible service delivery and employment practices.

By taking a proactive and collaborative approach, the Capital West AAC can help ensure that accessibility becomes a fundamental consideration in all municipal planning, policies, and services across the region.

This report has been submitted by,



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