

# JOINT ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2025



## CAPITAL WEST ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE



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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 partner 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 meet the requirements of the Accessible BC Act by providing clear guidance on how the partner municipalities will provide more accessible employment standards and improve service delivery through an accessibility lens.

Future 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).



# TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

- BOKÉCEN (Pauquachin)
- MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat)
- Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay)
- SṪÁUTW (Tsawout)
- T'Sou-ke
- W JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip)
- W SIKEM (Tseycum)
- x<sup>w</sup>sepsəm (Esquimalt)
- Songhees
- Lək<sup>w</sup>əṅən, SENĆOᖅEN, 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*” outlines 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. The Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference provide additional information regarding committee membership. 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.

# BACKGROUND - CONTINUED

- 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 island’s workforce, 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:

<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	<b>POPULATION (total)</b>	<b>CITIZENS (over 65)</b>	<b>PARKS (total)</b>	<b>LAND AREA (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>
<b>Colwood</b>	18,961	3,655	50	17.66
<b>Esquimalt</b>	17,533	3,625	30	7.08
<b>Highlands</b>	2,482	450	7	38.01
<b>Langford</b>	46,584	6,405	57	41.43
<b>Metchosin</b>	5,067	1,320	6	69.57
<b>Sooke</b>	15,086	3,055	80	56.62
<b>View Royal</b>	11,575	2,415	72	14.33

# DEFINITIONS

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

## Accessibility

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:

1. caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies, and
2. 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.<sup>†</sup>

## Impairment

Includes a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.<sup>†</sup>

## Inclusion

The practice of providing equitable access to opportunities and resources for anyone who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.

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<sup>†</sup>Definition as written from the Accessible BC Act (Government of British Columbia , 2023.)

# 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. Membership vacancies are advertised by each member municipality as they arise. If you are interested in joining the Committee or for more information about this volunteer opportunity, please contact a participating municipality.

## **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 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.
- 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 and 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.

# INDIVIDUAL ACCESSIBILITY PLANS

In this section of the Plan, each partner municipality will present their individual accessibility plans. These are based off of feedback received and differ from community to community. **The plans are presented in the following order:**

1. City of Colwood
2. Township of Esquimalt
3. District of Highlands
4. City of Langford
5. District of Metchosin
6. District of Sooke
7. Town of View Royal



# CITY OF COLWOOD

Accessibility Plan



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## CITY OF COLWOOD

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### Introduction

The City of Colwood is a charming seaside community located on the southern coast of Vancouver Island. The City of Colwood sits on the ancestral lands of the Teechamista and the Lekwungen-speaking people of the Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations. We are honoured to have the opportunity to build strong working relationships with the local First Nations based on learning, openness, humility and respect. We endeavor to walk and roll softly on these ancestral lands of the Xwsepsum and Songhees families.

Colwood is rapidly growing, with a current population of approximately 22,000 people as of 2024 and offers multiple recreational programs and facilities. Boasting over 7 kilometers of oceanfront including beautiful beaches, parks and trails, Colwood fosters a strong sense of community, with many residents actively participating in local events and volunteer opportunities. Renowned for its friendly atmosphere, rich heritage, and connection to nature, Colwood is a wonderful place to live and visit.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CAO

On behalf of the Corporation of the City of Colwood, we are pleased to introduce our new Accessibility Plan, a testament to our commitment to accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion. We believe our community's strength lies in embracing and celebrating all residents. Colwood's greatest asset is our diverse community, enriched by various experiences, backgrounds, abilities and perspectives.

Our goal is to exceed legislative requirements reflecting our dedication to creating an accessible, inclusive and welcoming environment where individuals of all ages and abilities can fully participate. We invite each of you to join us on this journey to build a strong, inclusive community where everyone belongs.

The Capital West Accessibility Committee, comprising Colwood, Esquimalt, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, Sooke, and View Royal, has developed a joint Accessibility Plan to improve accessibility across the region. Our regional approach aims to enhance inclusivity and accessibility for everyone, including people with disabilities, marginalized groups and people experiencing barriers in our community.

This collaborative effort fosters resource sharing, cooperation and avoids duplication of work, ensuring each municipality's unique needs and vision are addressed.

I would like to thank the members of the Capital West Accessibility Committee and all the residents who contributed their insights and feedback. This Accessibility Plan is just the beginning.

We are committed to continuously improving and adapting to meet the evolving needs of our community.

**Jason Johnson**

Chief Administrative Officer

# MESSAGE FROM HR TEAM

The Human Resources Department plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of the City of Colwood's Corporate Accessibility Plan. The HR team is actively participating in the development and execution of the Plan to ensure we are fostering an equitable and inclusive workplace culture. This includes ensuring that all employees, regardless of their abilities, have access to the necessary resources and support to succeed in their roles. The Plan emphasizes the importance of improving employment standards and service delivery through an accessibility lens.

The Human Resources department is responsible for developing, promoting and enforcing policies that foster equity, inclusivity and accessibility. This includes providing training for staff on disability awareness and accommodation, as well as ensuring feedback mechanisms are in place to continuously improve accessibility initiatives. By prioritizing accessibility in our policies and practices, HR can help ensure that individuals with disabilities are not only hired but also retained and given opportunities for advancement within the organization. This commitment to accessibility not only benefits employees with disabilities but also enhances the overall equity, diversity and inclusivity of the workplace, leading to a richer, more productive and engaging workplace community.

## Our Accessibility Story

In 1989 the City of Colwood established a select committee charged by Council to advise them on issues affecting people with disabilities. Its objective was to make The City more livable by removing physical and social barriers allowing full participation in city life. The design of Colwood City Hall prioritized the needs of persons with disabilities by creating a universally accessible, single-story building at ground level. This includes accessible hallways, washrooms, and parking areas. In 1993 the Committee expanded to include neighbouring municipalities and rebranded as the Intermunicipal Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (IACDI). The City of Colwood had provided support to the Committee by providing administrative support and funding.

Past accomplishments of the City of Colwood and IACDI include the following:

- Annual IACDI picnics to foster community engagement and inclusive environment.
- Development of the Guide to User Friendly Trails in partnership with CRD Regional Parks and West Shore Parks and Recreation to create accessible trails for people of all abilities.
- Measuring Up Grant – Creation of accessibility art space at the Esquimalt Lagoon.

In addition, IACDI promoted initiatives that fostered active living and the full participation of people with disabilities in their community. These included providing information and advocacy, providing feedback on accessibility issues, and hosting community events to ensure people with disabilities stay connected.

In 2024, IACDI became a society and was renamed to Access West Shore Society (AWSS). The purpose of the society is to advise municipalities of the Capital Regional District of the need to establish, develop, and maintain equitable policies, services, and facilities for persons with disabilities, including, but not limited to transportation, housing, employment, education, and recreation. AWSS also works to identify barriers to services and facilities encountered by people with disabilities and collaborate with local governments and other community organizations to address them.

More information on the documents referenced in our accessibility story are available online at <https://www.esquimalt.ca/government-bylaws/committees/capital-west-accessibility-advisory-committee> or from the Administration Department at Esquimalt Municipal Hall, 1229 Esquimalt Road.

Colwood's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan sets out improvements through pathways that Colwood would like to see meaningful progress as we strive to make Colwood ever-more welcoming, inclusive and culturally engaging for both its employees and the programs and services offered by the City.

**Engagement** - The City of Colwood has developed various strategies to enhance engagement, promoting social inclusion and equity. These strategies include offering multiple community engagement options, such as citizen committees, surveys, town halls, events, and accessible website features for providing feedback on the City's programs and services.

**Well-being** - Colwood enhances health, well-being, and quality of life for its employees and residents through advocacy, regulation, and proactive initiatives. The City supports access to housing and healthcare, promotes safety and accessibility, and provides recreational options. Opportunities for seniors and youth are created to foster social connections and wellness, while also supporting community groups and food security initiatives.

**Infrastructure** - Colwood works to enhance quality of life for Colwood residents and visitors by creating a connected network of accessible streets, sidewalks, trails and cycling routes that allow people of all ages and abilities to move safely and conveniently throughout the City.

**Governance** – Colwood engages citizens in the governance of The City through clear, honest communications, transparent decision making and through accessible engagement. We are committed to exceptional customer service and ensuring the efficient and effective delivery of services.

**Economy** – Colwood makes decisions that promote the prosperity of residents, businesses, and The City as a whole. Colwood promotes economic drivers that encourage local business and investment. A variety of businesses can significantly increase accessibility in several ways:

- **Physical Accessibility** – more opportunities to create spaces that are accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities.
- **Economic Accessibility** – increased competition among businesses can lead to lower prices and more affordable options for consumers, making goods and services more accessible.
- **Service Variety** – businesses could offer a wider range of products and services, catering to diverse needs and preferences.
- **Employment Opportunities** – creation of more job opportunities, including positions that can be tailored to individuals with disabilities.
- **Technological Advancements** – adoption of new technologies that enhance accessibility such as accessible digital platforms.

Businesses that focus on accessibility contribute to a more inclusive society.

**Environment** – Colwood values our ecosystems and natural assets, which includes trees and the urban forest, ecosystem-services such as natural stormwater systems, and unique landscapes including hillsides and shorelines.

### **Accessible initiatives include:**

- **Sustainable Building Practices** - Implementing green building standards, such as LEED certification, ensures that new and renovated buildings are both accessible and environmentally friendly.
- **Public Transportation Enhancements:** Improving the accessibility of public transportation such as bike lanes and sidewalks can reduce the reliance on personal vehicles, leading to lower emissions and less traffic congestion. Increased transportation options encourage and support more people to use these services, which are beneficial for the environment.
- **Inclusive Outdoor Spaces:** Creating accessible parks and recreational areas promotes the use of green spaces and community well-being. This can include installing accessible pathways, benches, and facilities that encourage all community members to enjoy and care for natural environments.
- **Waste Reduction Programs:** Accessibility plans can include initiatives to reduce waste, such as recycling programs at city events and the use of digital documents instead of paper. These efforts help minimize the environmental impact of business operation.
- **Green Procurement Policies:** Adopting procurement policies that prioritize environmentally friendly products and services ensures that accessibility improvements are made sustainably. This can include purchasing recycled materials, energy-efficient equipment, and eco-friendly office supplies.
- **Natural Climate Solutions:** Efforts such as improving biodiversity, ecosystems and tree cover provide many benefits, including ecosystem-services such as cooling during longer, hotter periods (reduce heat island effect) and mitigating the impacts of extreme weather. These initiatives not only contribute to environment but will also support accessibility throughout the City.

Colwood's Accessibility Plan can contribute to a healthier environment while promoting inclusivity and accessibility for all.

## The Plan

The City of Colwood's Corporate Accessibility Plan outlines the steps in which The City will further identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility for our programs and services. It also seeks to foster a culture of equity and inclusion for all current and future residents, visitors, volunteers, and employees.

The Accessibility Plan solidifies Colwood's dedication to identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers. It outlines our initiatives and actions to promote transparency, accountability, feedback, and dialogue, ensuring the Plan evolves to meet the community's needs and experiences.

This approach aims to be more realistic, ensuring The Plan is both manageable and achievable within current resources. As staff deepen their understanding over the initial 3-year term, the organization will continue to integrate accessibility into regular operations. Early successes in this inaugural Plan will build momentum for the next Plan in 2027. The Plan will guide the City of Colwood in achieving long-term accessibility goals in line with legislative requirements. It will take time to eliminate barriers, however the Plan will assist in identifying how we can improve accessibility going forward.

The Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee is a collaborative effort that focused on *employment and service delivery* as they are the first two standards of the *Accessibility BC Act*. This approach was adopted through recommendations from the province as well as information received through hired consultants.

## Services provided

- **Administration and Corporate Services** – Processing and Issuing business licensing, facility rentals, cemetery administration, policy development, information requests, record management, public notices, Council and Committee meetings, and front counter services.
- **Building Permits and Inspections** – Issuing building permits and conducting inspections to ensure safety and efficiency.
- **Bylaw Services** – Enforcement of Bylaws to ensure community safety and quality of life.
- **Communication and Engagement** – promoting well-being and social connections, event planning, volunteer coordination, city website, community engagement, media relations.
- **Community Planning** - Long-range planning and policy; heritage conservation; arts, culture and recreation planning; environmental sustainability; and economic prosperity.

- **Development Services** – Align development with the policies and objectives contained in the Official Community Plan and land use regulations through the review of subdivision, Official Community Plan amendments, rezoning, tree management, sign, temporary use, development variance and development permits.
- **Engineering** - Ensures sustainable infrastructure by managing public projects and collaborating with stakeholders. They optimize traffic flow, implement innovative projects, manage asset lifecycles, and support land development to meet community needs.
- **Emergency Planning** – Preparing the community for emergencies and ensuring personal preparedness.
- **Fire Department** – Fire rescue and fire safety education
- **Finance** – Managing financial planning, property taxes, payments accounting, payroll, risk management, asset management, procurement.
- **GIS (Geographical Information Systems)** offers visual representation of organizational data through various publicly available web maps.
- **Health Care** – medical clinic to provide Colwood families access to family doctors.
- **Human Resources** – Recruitment and onboarding, job evaluation and compensation, benefits, occupational health and safety, employee relations, labour relations.
- **Information Technology** – uses technology and data to enhance community programs, services, and governance.
- **Public Works** – Maintenance of parks, roads, sidewalks, sewers, storm drains, and the Branch Drop Off Program.
- **Youth Engagement** – Connecting youth to people, creation of safe places for youth, preventative programming, promotion and improvement of access to services.

## **Regulation**

There are eight standards included in the *Accessible BC Act*:

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

## **Changing Paces - Recommendations**

The Capital West Accessibility Committee engaged Changing Paces, an accessibility consulting firm to conduct a survey and facilitate workshop engagement sessions. Changing Paces facilitators are persons who have lived experience with a disability. Through the engagement Changing Paces collected data and provided recommendations to be included within the Accessibility Plan.

The following is a summary of the recommendations from Changing Paces have been reviewed by City staff and include what The City has done, what we are doing, and what we may explore to improve accessibility (see next page).

# 1. Accessible Parking

## ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Delivery of Services
- Built Environment
- Transportation

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Exceed minimum requirements and ensure accessible parking during events.

## What We Have Done (Past)

- Two accessible parking spots within the public parking lot at City Hall.
- One accessible parking spot within the staff parking area at City Hall.
- Identified accessible parking spots at the Esquimalt Lagoon.
- Adopted local accessible parking regulations with comprehensive design standards.
- Accessible stalls added to Quarry Park and Colwood Park and Ride.
- Accessible signage.

## What We Are Doing (Present)

- Investigating the addition of an accessible parking spots at: Emery Family Hall and St. John the Baptist, 170 Goldfinch, Beachlands, and Royal Bay.

## What We May Explore (Future)

- Obtain data on the current usage of accessible parking spots within Colwood parks to determine if additional parking spots should be explored.
- Consideration for van accessible parking.

## 2. City Facilities

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Delivery of Services
- Built Environment
- Information and Communications

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Provide accessible entrances, washrooms, and seating.

### What We Have Done (Past)

- Accessible button controlled front door at City Hall.
- Public washrooms at City Hall have large accessible stalls.
- Emery Hall washrooms renovated in 2024 and are accessible, including an automatic door entry.
- City Hall has benches and chairs with arm rests within the foyer.
- Chairs in gallery are easily moveable to create additional accessibility if required.
- Chairs with arms are included within the chambers.
- Webcasting and allowing for electronic public participation at Council meetings.
- Sound system is included within the Committee Room and in the foyer.
- Consultation with Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) member when accessibility improvements were done at Emery Family Hall.

### What We Are Doing (Present)

- Explore an additional power door at the staff parking lot entrance to City Hall.
- Addition of accessible public bathrooms at 170 Goldfinch.
- Investigate additional chairs with arms (not on wheels) for Council Chambers.

### What We May Explore (Future)

- Reviewing front entrance to include a power door for Emery Hall.
- Explore public washrooms at City Hall for the installation of power door entry.
- Explore adjustable podium to allow easier access for public using mobility devices.
- Add a hearing loop for Council and Committee meetings.

### 3. Municipal Parks, Trails and Playgrounds

#### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Delivery of Services
- Built Environment
- Information and Communications

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Ensure accessible playgrounds, pathways, and rest stops.

#### What We Have Done (Past)

- Individual Park management plans have identified areas where an increase in benches and picnic shelters is required. [Individual plans for the following parks: Colwood Creek, Ocean View, Lookout Lake, Havenwood, and Latoria Creek.]
- Accessible art space and washrooms at the Esquimalt Lagoon.
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the integration of accessibility for all ages and abilities in the planning, development, and upgrades of parks, trails, and recreation.

#### What We Are Doing (Present)

- Multi-Use Pathway on the Waterfront – developing an accessible, multi-use pathway along four kilometres of City waterfront. The project includes pathways, raised boardwalks, meeting places, improved parking, and wheelchair mats to guide visitors through sensitive areas while protecting natural features.
- Beach Access Mat at the Esquimalt Lagoon during the summer to provide easier access to the beach for individuals with mobility challenges.
- Accessible Amenities: Providing accessible washrooms, picnic areas, and seating.
- Signage and Wayfinding: Implementing clear and easy to read signage to help visitors navigate the parks.

#### What We May Explore (Future)

- Accessible pathways: Ensuring pathways are wide enough for wheelchairs and mobility devices.
- Inclusive playgrounds: Installing playground equipment that is accessible to children of all abilities.
- Park management plans have identified areas where an increase in benches and picnic shelters in Royal Bay and Beachlands.

## 4. Workspaces, Accommodations, Inclusion

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Employment
- Health
- Education
- Information and Communications

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Offer ergonomic modifications and flexible work schedules.

### What We Have Done (Past)

- The front counter at City Hall includes a lower service counter area for those using mobility devices.
- A mental health and wellness program has been implemented to build resilience and capacity for fire department members. This important information also provides first responders with transferable tools to help deliver community services in a compassionate and inclusive manner.
- Autism awareness training has been delivered to first responders.
- Supported employees who have been injured through a modified return to work program.
- The fire department has established a mission statement that includes key visioning and core values that act as a guide to help facilitate the decision-making process in a transparent and inclusive manner.

## What We Have Done (Past) - Continued

- Workplace practices are adaptable and individualized wherever possible and support physical and psychological health and safety including:
  - Hybrid meeting spaces are in place to support staff attending meetings in person or virtually,
  - Flexible Work Arrangements Policy includes multiple options, including individualized/customized options to optimize inclusivity and accessibility,
  - Healthy ergonomic work practices are encouraged, and appropriate tools and equipment are provided (example: height adjustable desks, including sit/stand styles; assistive technologies are explored and provided); our Occupational Health and Safety program offers ergonomic consultations and assists with identifying adjustments and options,
  - Injury and Illness Management and Return to Work Policy encourages maintaining connection with employees who are temporarily disabled and workplace accommodations to ensure work can continued to be performed at an appropriate level to current abilities,
  - Job evaluation methodology has been implemented to as an equitable/unbiased approach to job classification, and
  - Compensation Philosophy and Exempt Compensation Policy implemented to promote pay equity and align with the BC Pay Transparency Act.

## What We Are Doing (Present)

- Facilities, including all physical spaces such as offices, restrooms, break rooms, common areas and walkways/hallways are ensured to be maintained as accessible for employees and meeting guests/visitors with disabilities and those facing barriers.
- Expanding mental and physical health programs for first responders to ensure they are prepared to support the community.

## What We May Explore (Future)

- Workplace emergency procedures to be updated to ensure measures are in place to consider, address and accommodate employees or workplace visitors with disabilities and those facing barriers.
- First responders will seek training opportunities related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity.

## 5. Collaboration with Persons with Accessibility Needs

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Information and Communications
- Delivery of Services
- Employment
- Information and Communications

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Engage with disability advocacy groups and involve people with disabilities in decision-making.

### What We Have Done (Past)

- Provided administrative support to the Access West Shore Society formally Intermunicipal Advisory Committee on Disabilities. 2013 through 2020, Colwood staff provided staff resources by attending meetings and recording minutes.
- Collaboration with neighbouring municipalities to create an Accessibility Plan.
- Creation of an accessible email address for residents to provide feedback and share their experiences regarding accessibility. [accessibility@colwood.ca](mailto:accessibility@colwood.ca).

### What We Are Doing (Present)

- Engage with disability advocacy groups and residents with disabilities in planning and decision-making processes.
- Creating an individual Colwood Accessibility Plan to improve access to municipal services, facilities, and natural and build environments. The Plan will first focus on employment and service delivery standards and will be reviewed and updated every three years.
- Colwood actively seeks feedback from residents to identify barriers and improve accessibility. Public participation is encouraged through various channels, including email, phone, in-person meetings and Let's Talk Colwood an online platform to engage residents.
- The Capital West Accessibility Committee is transitioning to have citizen representatives on the Committee.
- Engagement with Changing Paces to conduct surveys to determine areas of focus for the Accessibility Corporate Plan.
- Engagement with the community through a comprehensive public education program focussing on special needs in relation to fire safety.

### What We Are Doing (Present) - Continued

- Established partnerships with building owners and occupiers to address occupant safety through a review and implementation of Fire Safety Plans or individual.
- Provide fire and life safety education and onsite assessments for individuals facing specialized challenges to ensure their safety and well-being is maintained.
- Review building and development proposals through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens.
- The City of Colwood has a subscription service through the city website that enables anyone including advocacy groups to subscribe to agendas and minutes of the CWAAC.

### What We May Explore (Future)

- Inclusion of the Accessibility Plan in the Ideas Fair as a topic for feedback from the community.
  - Creation of an email group of all organizations that are focused on improving accessibility.
  - Additional Engagement sessions focused on specific demographics such as seniors.
-

## 6. Communications

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Information and Communications
- Delivery of Services
- Education

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Provide multiple communication avenues and ensure accessible event promotion.

### What We Have Done (Past)

- Launched the new website in 2024, designed to be more user-friendly and accessible, providing easier navigation and improved access to information about city services, events and news.
- New website meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) – provides guidelines on making web content more accessible to people with disabilities.
- Quick link on the main website to the accessibility page.
- Neighbourhood Wayfinding Strategy – to improve navigation with directional and pedestrian signage designed based on legibility standards.
- Offer paper versions or ‘call to complete’ (where a staff member will input verbal responses on a resident’s behalf) options for all online surveys.
- Increased engagement with youth to ensure their perspective is included in decision making.
- Translation option added to the websites home page.
- Increased engagement with youth to ensure their perspective is included in decision making.
- Developed and maintained relationships with community groups to obtain increased access to user groups for the purposes of engagement and delivery of emergency related education and training.
- Organized and delivered emergency related initiatives to prepare the public for local disasters through community events such as the Great BC ShakeOut, Tsunami Hike to High Ground, Fire Department Annual Open House, and Regional Emergency Preparedness Fair.

### What We Are Doing (Present)

- All phone calls during operational hours at City Hall are answered by a live person.
- Utilizing multiple methods of communication to ensure health and safety education is accessible to all members of the community which includes the use of social media, print, and in-person platforms.

## What We May Explore (Future)

- Investigate the need to having translation available for those whose first language is not English, including American Sign Language.
- Explore additional public participation opportunities such as town halls.

## 7. Digital Solutions

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Communication
- Delivery of Services

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Use electronic forms and accessible document training.

## What We Have Done (Past)

- Implemented DocuSign that provides better accessibility. DocuSign allows users to navigate through the signing process using only keyboard commands, works with screen reads (JAWS and DVDA) making it accessible for visually impaired users, adheres to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- Digital Accessibility, creation of new website follows the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to ensure it is usable for residents with various disabilities and offers one-click translation.
- Citizen engagement platforms allow residents to report issues, track the status of their requests and access the information.
- Website provides a quick link for residents to submit an action request.
- Electronic payment option to allow residents to pay taxes.
- Creation of online forms reduces paperwork and streamlines service delivery.
- Cybersecurity Measures – implementation of robust cybersecurity protocols to protect residents' data and ensure safe digital interactions.

## What We Are Doing (Present)

- Creation of how-to tutorials for staff on the Intranet.
- Implementation of new records system using M365
- Completion of Tempest to include webservices and online payment functionality.

## What We May Explore (Future)

- Explore accessibility funding programs to implement accessibility initiatives such as built environment, education and awareness, policy develop, and the use of assistive technologies.
- Virtual learning sessions and information on best practices for accessibility.

## 8. Customer Solutions

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Communication
- Delivery of Services

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Offer customer service training and consult with accessibility organizations.

### What We Have Done (Past)

- Capital West Accessibility Committee member has received their Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) Professional Training.
- Engaged with the Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre (IDHHC) to connect community members with support programs that help overcome the challenges faced by hearing impairment during fire alarm activations.

### What We Are Doing (Present)

- Establishment of new medical clinic - This pilot project's goal is to increase community well-being by providing residents with access to a family doctor. The central location will be easily accessible by public transportation and the range of services will reduce the need for residents to travel to multiple locations for health care. Healthcare will be more convenient for residents with accessibility issues.

### What We May Explore (Future)

- Offer training for municipal staff on accessibility standards and best practices to ensure they can assist residents with disabilities effectively.
- Training opportunities can be cost shared between all municipalities included in the Capital West Accessibility Committee.
- Look to forming partnerships with local organizations and advocacy groups to develop and implement accessibility initiatives.

## 9. Policy Related Solutions

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Communication
- Delivery of Services
- Employment

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Integrate accessibility into planning and processes from the start.

### What We Have Done (Past)

- Implemented DocuSign on all City permit application forms to provide better accessibility.
- Consideration of accessibility when drafting plans such as the Active Transportation Plan and Transportation Master Plan
- Integrated equity considerations as an element of planning and implementation of key actions of the City's Climate Action Plan (2023), including related to emergency planning/ disaster risk reduction, building retrofits for energy and resilience, urban forest and natural asset planning.
- One of the three overarching goals of the City's Climate Action Plan is to maximize co-benefits of climate action. One of the co-benefits identified in the plan is for social inclusion and equity and other related co-benefits.

### What We Are Doing (Present)

- The City's Climate Action Plan has a priority action (C1-2) to develop an equity lens to support decision-making in the City and to provide professional development for Colwood staff, including to support planning and initiatives that will increase climate resiliency and co-benefits for vulnerable populations.
- Development of community disaster risk reduction visioning and policies that will be considered the implemented in an inclusive manner.
- Establishing a community wide mental health resilience strategy that will act as a roadmap to prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters.

## What We May Explore (Future)

- Addition of Accessibility section on all City reports that relate to employment and delivery of services.
- Review of the City’s Public Participation Policy through the lens of accessibility.
- Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Adaption initiative. Make additional efforts that recognize the unique challenges of people with disabilities during such events as a heat dome. Staff will be consulting with vulnerable groups as part of our Community Risk Assessment to be included in Colwood’s Disaster Risk Reduction Plan and Mental Health Resilience Strategy.

## 10. Employment

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Communication
- Delivery of Services
- Employment

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Ensure job postings and hiring processes are accessible and inclusive.

## What We Have Done (Past)

- Hiring practices consider accessibility and inclusivity:
- Internal only job opportunities are posted in hardcopy within the City and distributed by email; internal and external job opportunities maintain our internal practices in addition to being posted by a variety of electronic means and online posting sites
- Job postings include language stating our commitment to equity and fostering inclusivity and that we value diversity; some postings may more overtly invite diversity, and consideration may be given to specific posting locations/sites to attract candidates that will bring enhanced diversity to the team
- Applications can be submitted by email or in person
- Virtual interviews are/can be supported
- In-person interview invitations provide general information relating to physical accessibility and invite candidates to contact HR confidentially to discuss further accommodations if needed.

Workplace practices are adaptable and individualized wherever possible and support physical and psychological health and safety:

## What We Have Done (Past) - Continued

- Hybrid meeting spaces are in place to support staff attending meetings in person or virtually
- Flexible Work Arrangements Policy includes multiple options, including individualized/customized options to optimize inclusivity and accessibility
- Healthy ergonomic work practices are encouraged, and appropriate tools and equipment are provided (example: height adjustable desks, including sit/stand styles; assistive technologies are explored and provided); our Occupational Health and Safety program offers ergonomic consultations and assists with identifying adjustments and options
- Injury and Illness Management and Return to Work Policy encourages maintaining connection with employees who are temporarily disabled and workplace accommodations to ensure work can continued to be performed at an appropriate level to current abilities
- Job evaluation methodology has been implemented to as an equitable/unbiased approach to job classification
- Compensation Philosophy and Exempt Compensation Policy implemented to promote pay equity and align with the BC Pay Transparency Act

## What We Are Doing (Present)

- Policies, procedures and practices are reviewed on an ongoing basis to consider inclusivity and accessibility.
- 2024 Benefits Review project currently in process includes incorporation of GBA+ methodology to assess our benefits program through a diversity and inclusion lens.
- Internal communications consider inclusivity and accessibility.
- Meetings, workshops, training sessions and staff events consider inclusivity and accessibility.
- Facilities, including all physical spaces such as offices, restrooms, break rooms, common areas and walkways/hallways are ensured to be maintained as accessible for employees and meeting guests/visitors with disabilities.
- Employee Satisfaction Survey is conducted every 3 years (next one is 2025) which provides a feedback mechanism on workplace matters, including matters related to inclusivity and accessibility.
- Embrace and promote diversity and inclusion in employment practices.

## What We May Explore (Future)

- Training to include accessibility awareness training for managers and supervisors as well as for all staff; potential for collaboration with neighbouring municipalities
- Workplace emergency procedures to be updated to ensure measures are in place to consider, address and accommodate employees or workplace visitors with disabilities
- Developing a plan to review areas of additional focus to enhance accessibility within the workplace; may include an accessibility audit.

## 11. City Events

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Communication
- Delivery of Services
- Employment

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Promote accessibility information and provide accessible event spaces.

## What We Have Done (Past)

- Provided accessible parking at Eats and Beats.
- Established a wheelchair viewing area at Eats and Beats.
- Provided a tent for Mental Health Awareness at Eats and Beats.
- Provided shuttle service to the event, and shuttle service for residents from Metchosin to the event at Eats and Beats.
- Provided shuttle service for elders and participants to the Indigenous Day event at RRU.
- Increased accessibility provided at the fire department Open House with designated accessible parking and access to all event displays.

## What We Are Doing (Present)

- Planning public participation events such as open houses and public workshops at accessible locations.

## 12. Infrastructure

### ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD

- Communication
- Delivery of Services
- Transportation
- Employment

**Changing Paces Recommendations:** Update sidewalks and crosswalks to meet accessibility standards.

### What We Have Done (Past)

- The Transportation Master Plan aims to enhance accessibility options for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. It focuses on improving facilities for walking, biking, and taking transit, making the City more accessible and reducing reliance on cars.
- Colwood has chosen to implement 2-meter side sidewalks as part of its Official Community Plan implementation and draft Active Transportation Network Plan. The goal of this initiative is to ensure accessibility through application of the 7 Principles of Universal Design and safety for all users.
- The 2-meter width allows two average size wheelchairs or strollers to pass each other comfortably.
- Adding sidewalks to areas that were previously unfinished road shoulders and applying design guidelines and best practices to endeavor to make these new amenities more accessible to all.
- Bus pad/shelter upgrades. New or refurbished bus pads to allow for accessible access.
- Wayfinding Signage.

### What We Are Doing (Present)

- Finalization of draft Active Transportation Network Plan including its section “6.2 - Universal Design” in concert with the Transportation Master Plan Update.
- Ongoing capital projects to improve roads inclusive of sidewalks, bikelanes, cross walks, intersections.
- Utilizing grant funding to support upgrades which include improving accessibility standards in situations such as at intersections/ cross walks and bike lanes.

### What We May Explore (Future)

- Consideration of regular assessment audits of City infrastructure to identify and address barriers.
- Ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to better appreciate and understand accessible design and planning at early stages in project and throughout delivery.
- Mobility mat at the Lagoon beach to make the shoreline more accessible.

## **2025 Plan - Objective 1: Employment**

Employment objectives include goals and actions aimed at creating an inclusive and accessible work environment at the City for people with disabilities. These objectives may include recruitment and hiring, training and development, retention and advancement, workplace accommodation and inclusive policies.

The City of Colwood strives to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunity to succeed in their employment and contribute fully to the workplace.

## **2025 Plan: Objective 1 – Delivery of Services**

The City will adopt methods and practices to ensure that goods, services, events, and activities are accessible to everyone in the community. This includes removing barriers that might prevent individuals from fully participating and ensuring that all aspects of service delivery are inclusive and equitable

The following initiatives reflect Colwood’s ongoing commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible community for everyone.

### **Approach**

For the initial three-year term, the City’s intention is for staff to:

- receive fundamental training;
- apply an accessibility lens to daily operations; and
- receive and consider public feedback.

The City aims to make continual improvements to accessibility and inclusivity by:

- Respecting the rights, dignity, and independence of persons with disabilities at all life stages.
- Creating a safe environment where all people feel welcomed, include, and valued.
- Providing opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in decision-making and Township life.
- Incorporating feedback and input from people with disabilities into processes, policy development, and decision-making.
- Listening and learning how to make programs, services, and physical infrastructure more accessible.

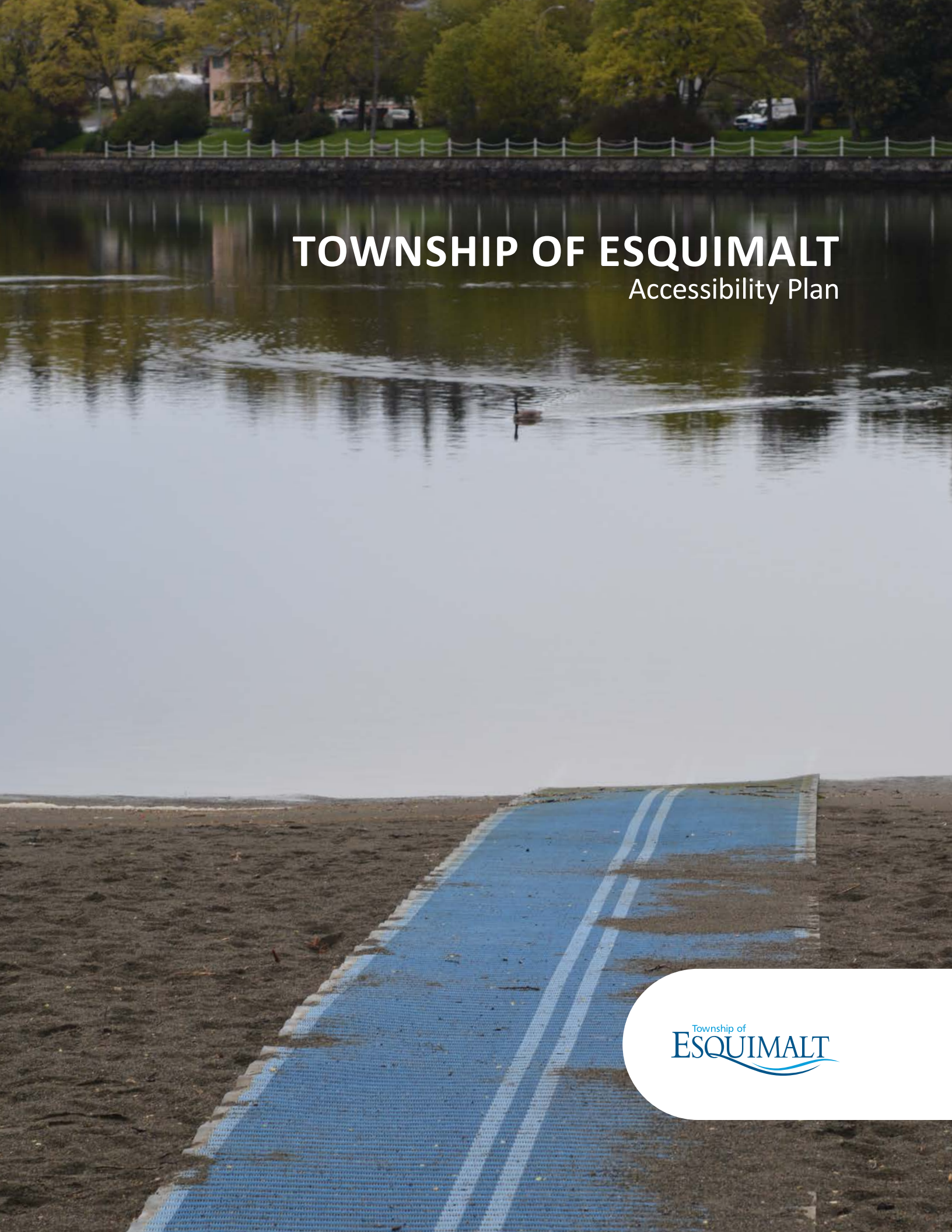
## Goals

The Accessibility Plan outlines a comprehensive approach to achieving long-term accessibility goals in line with legislative requirements and aims to enhance our corporate capacity to lead, model, and advocate for accessibility changes within the community. The Plan emphasizes the importance of eliminating barriers, improving accessibility across various aspects of city life with the intention of providing professional and inclusive services, and to build strong, collaborative partnerships within the community.

Colwood is working to create an inclusive work environment for people with disabilities, marginalized communities and others who experience barriers, ensuring that services are accessible to all residents.

Achieving barrier-free status is a significant endeavor that will evolve as we learn, incorporate feedback from those with lived experiences, foster strong relationships with disability and accessibility communities, introduce new technology, and deepen our understanding of disability dynamics. By working together, we can make Colwood a place where everyone can fully and equally participate in the community and feel empowered to pursue the life they wish to live with a strong sense of belonging.

Public input and feedback from those with lived experiences will be crucial in monitoring and improving Colwood's accessibility performance. This will help us better understand the barriers and challenges faced by our residents, visitors, and staff. The input, suggestions, and feedback we receive will guide the continuous enhancement of the City's programs, spaces, and services, ensuring meaningful access for everyone and a community where everyone can flourish.



# TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Accessibility Plan

Township of  
**ESQUIMALT**

# Township of Esquimalt – Accessibility Plan

## Introduction

Esquimalt offers broad municipal services including infrastructure, protective services, financial services, garbage collection, bylaw enforcement, emergency planning, human resources, recreation services, economic development, municipal archives, legislative services, elections voting services, communications, parks and recreation services, and governance.

The Township is striving towards the goal of becoming a barrier-free community.

Through the collaborative work with the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee and the development of this Accessibility Plan, we strive to honour the rights, dignity, and independence of people with disabilities within our community and to encourage a culture of equity and inclusion for all current and future citizens, visitors, volunteers, and employees.

Our abilities are in a constant state of change throughout our lives. Every person is likely to experience a temporary, periodic, or permanent disability during their lifetime. People with disabilities need to be seen, heard, recognized, engaged, and valued in our community. We all have a role to play in challenging biases and stereotypes about people living with disabilities.

By changing how we talk and think about disabilities and by making measured and strategic improvements to accessibility, we will make progress towards our goal. Working hard to make Esquimalt accessible will be universally beneficial to all people who interact with the municipality.

## Our Accessibility Story

Esquimalt has a history of recognizing the importance of accessibility considerations in the Township well in advance of the newly enacted legislation. The Township's Access Awareness Committee ran from 2007 – 2012 with the purpose of making Esquimalt more accessible. The committee engaged with staff, agencies such as BC Transit, and other community groups to provide input on broad service delivery such as transportation, infrastructure, recreation programming, and conducted accessibility advocacy and public awareness. The Committee also participated in community events including Buccaneer Days, Access Awareness Days, hosted several community organizations including Community Living Victoria and the Disability Resource Centre, and participated in the 2009 Accessibility Audit.

The Township received a grant of \$20,000 from the provincial government's Measuring Up Program in 2009. The funds were used to engage the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC BC) to conduct an accessibility audit of municipal buildings, public spaces, and businesses. The audit acknowledged the strides the Township had made to improve accessibility but also recognized that more work needed to be done to eliminate barriers.

In response to new legislation implemented through the *Accessible BC Act* in 2021, Esquimalt partnered with six municipalities to establish the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee (CWAAC) to initiate the development of this Accessibility Plan in 2023. Collectively the CWAAC has completed two phases of formal engagement including engaging Changing Paces, a consultancy with accessibility subject matter expertise and lived experience to gather valuable feedback to help inform the development of the inaugural Accessibility Plan. In addition, Esquimalt staff developed an accessibility inventory to better understand the work completed to date and to serve as an aid in determining next and future actions and initiatives to enhance accessibility in the Township.

Esquimalt continues to learn about incorporating accessibility into all regular operations in an intentional, consistent, and effective way. While the municipality has implemented impactful accessibility solutions, there is much work to do now and into the future. A truly accessible Township requires continual improvements to our policies, programs, communications, services, facilities, and built environments over time that meets the changing needs of our residents, staff, volunteers, and visitors.

More information on the documents referenced in our accessibility story are available online at <https://www.esquimalt.ca/government-bylaws/committees/capital-west-accessibility-advisory-committee> or from the Administration Department at Esquimalt Municipal Hall, 1229 Esquimalt Road.

## The Plan

The Township of Esquimalt's Accessibility Plan strives to honour the rights, dignity, and independence of people with disabilities within our community and to encourage a culture of equity and inclusion for all current and future citizens, visitors, volunteers, and employees.

The Accessibility Plan formalizes Esquimalt's commitment to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers. The Plan documents our initiatives and actions to encourage transparency, accountability, feedback, and dialogue that help the Plan evolve to reflect the needs and experiences of the community.

Identified initiatives and actions will be completed as resources permit and in accordance with annual budgeting and Council Priorities planning cycles. The Plan and projects will be reviewed, revised, monitored, and reported on annually and as new information emerges.

This is intended to be a more honest approach where the Plan must be both manageable and achievable within current capacity. As staff expand their understanding over this initial three-year term, the organization will learn to incorporate accessibility into regular operations in an informed and effective way. Early success in this inaugural Plan will build momentum for the next Plan in 2027.

This approach will help us to move towards our long-term accessibility goals in accordance with legislative obligations.

## The Four Objectives

The long-term goal of Esquimalt's Accessibility Plan is to develop a barrier-free community.

To support the achievement of a barrier-free community of inclusive culture, services, programs, and spaces, the inaugural Plan is arranged around four objectives:

- **Culture:** Developing a municipal culture where all people feel valued, respected, supported, and welcomed.
- **Consultation:** Fostering inclusion through consultation in the planning of municipal policies, programs, and services.
- **Universality:** Providing fair access to employment, programs, services, and infrastructure.
- **Ubiquity:** Incorporating accessibility considerations into the general operations of all Township departments.



The following tables outline Esquimalt's past, present, and future initiatives and actions to achieve the Plan. Implementation of accessibility actions and initiatives can result in universal benefit such that one solution may address multiple objectives identified in this Plan.

## Regulation

There are eight standards included in the *Accessible British Columbia Act*:

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

The initial Plan contains two priority standards of focus: employment and service delivery. These focus areas will help to develop an education and awareness training plan that will support the establishment of an inclusive and accessible workplace and inclusive service design and delivery.

## Approach

For the initial three-year term, the Township's intention is for staff to:

- receive fundamental training;
- apply an accessibility lens to daily operations; and
- receive and consider public feedback.

The Township aims to make continual improvements to accessibility and inclusivity by:

- Respecting the rights, dignity, and independence of persons with disabilities at all life stages.
- Creating a safe environment where all people feel welcomed, included, and valued.
- Providing opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in decision-making and Township life.
- Incorporating feedback and input from people with disabilities into processes, policy development, and decision-making.
- Listening and learning how to make programs, services, and physical infrastructure more accessible.

## Conclusion

Over the mid to long term range of the Accessibility Plan, our intent is to increase our corporate capacity to lead, model, and advocate for accessibility change-making within the community, deliver professional and inclusive services, and develop strong and collaborative partnerships within the accessibility community and beyond.

Achieving barrier-free status is a significant undertaking that will continue to evolve as we continue to learn, welcome and incorporate feedback from those with lived-experience, foster

strong relationships with the disability and accessibility communities, introduce new technology, and grow our understanding of the dynamics of disability. Working together will help to make Esquimalt a community where every person can participate fully and equally in the community and is empowered to pursue the life they wish to live with a strong sense of belonging.

Public input and lived-experience feedback will be an integral part of monitoring and enhancing Esquimalt's accessibility performance and gaining better understanding of the accessibility barriers and challenges that our residents, visitors, and staff experience. Input, suggestions, and feedback received will help to inform the continuous improvement of the Township's programs, spaces, and services to achieve meaningful access for all.

## Contact Us

The Township welcomes feedback on accessibility in the following ways:

**Email:** [accessibility@esquimalt.ca](mailto:accessibility@esquimalt.ca)

**Phone:** 250-414-7177

**Mail/Delivery:** 1229 Esquimalt Rd, Esquimalt, BC, V9A 3P1

## Priority 1: Employment

Includes all aspects of employment within the Township. Including, but not limited to, citizen volunteers, municipal staff, and third-party contractors, considering all aspects of employment and volunteerism including recruitment, retention, training and development, and physical work environments.

What We Have Done (Past)	Culture	Consultation	Universality	Ubiquity
Conducted ergonomic workstations and assessments.			X	
Assessed individual and shared physical spaces to provide accessible work environments.		X		
Implemented virtual interviews.				X
Provided work-from-home accommodations and modified work hours.	X			
Accommodated wider range of physical abilities than have traditionally been required for specific roles.				X
Revised return to work program to support existing employees recovering from injury or illness.			X	
What We Are Doing (Present)	Culture	Consultation	Universality	Ubiquity
Continuing to conduct ergonomic workspace assessments.			X	
Providing flexible accommodation(s) as needed.		X		
Progressing implementation of Active Transportation Network Plan.			X	
Including accessible icon on employment and volunteer opportunity postings.	X			
Providing direct contact information to request accommodations.				X
Reviewing job descriptions to remove unnecessary physical barriers and language to prioritize diversity while ensuring that all candidates meet necessary qualifications.			X	
Updating work-from-home policy.	X			
Reviewing and updating job postings and volunteer applications to include information on accessibility accommodations and reflect that the Township is dedicated to recruiting and supporting a diverse workforce.		X		

## Priority 1: Employment

What We May Explore (Future)	Culture	Consultation	Universality	Ubiquity
Develop processes and guides to ensure that website authors and contributors are aware of accessibility standards and best practices.				X
Facilitate accessible PDF training to improve document accessibility.			X	
Engage in regional collaboration on hiring initiatives to promote accessibility and inclusion.				X
Collaborate with other municipalities on training and resource opportunities.				X

## Priority 2: Service Delivery

Encompasses the goods and services provided by a 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.

What We Have Done (Past)	Culture	Consultation	Universality	Ubiquity
Joined the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee.	X			
Established the <a href="mailto:accessibility@esquimalt.ca">accessibility@esquimalt.ca</a> email address as the Township's dedicated public feedback tool on accessibility.		X		
Compiled an "Accessibility Inventory" to examine current accessibility achievements and identify future development areas and initiatives.			X	
Used the Township's digital platform to promote awareness and advocacy in collaboration with external agencies.	X			
Incorporated alternate text on social media posts and website.			X	
Made surveys and public engagement opportunities available in electronic and in-person formats.			X	
Implemented livestreaming and meeting video archiving online of Council and Committee meetings.		X		
Developed online building inspection booking system.				X
Created online fillable forms.			X	
Implemented remote payment options.			X	
Offered electronic licence renewal and invoicing (for most services).			X	
Established Council Policy for the maintenance of sidewalks.		X		
Established requirements for sidewalk clearing included in Maintenance of Property and Nuisance Regulation Bylaw.		X		
Increased budget for installing curb ramps and other accessibility improvements.				X
Developed Active Transportation Network Plan to meet All Ages and Abilities Criteria.		X		
Implemented plastic strips as control joints instead of trowelled lines in sidewalks.				X
Installed Regular Rectangular Flashing Beacon crosswalks with accessible push buttons.				X
Lowered speed limits throughout the municipality.		X		
Implemented Mail Ballots as an additional voting opportunity.			X	
Implemented electronic participation in Council and Committee meetings.			X	

## Priority 2: Service Delivery

What We Are Doing (Present)	Culture	Consultation	Universality	Ubiquity
Establishing quick-build traffic calming to shorten crossing distances.		X		
Improving network of paths throughout municipal parks.				X
Working to provide adequate seating and shade in municipal parks.		X		
Providing accessible document training for staff.	X			
Researching opportunities to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance website functionality.				X
Expanding seating options in Council Chambers.			X	
Reviewing options to incorporate closed captioning and/or meeting transcripts for Council and Committee Meetings.			X	
Procuring assistive technology such as hearing loop systems or alternatives for purchase.		X		
Exploring expansion of online credit card payment system options for other services.				X
Training website authors and contributors for awareness of accessibility standards.	X			
Providing accessibility awareness training for staff, Council, and volunteers.	X			
Learning about options for ASL interpretation for Council and Committee meetings and other municipal events.			X	

## Priority 2: Service Delivery

What We May Explore (Future)	Culture	Consultation	Universality	Ubiquity
Develop a library of inclusive images for publications and communications.	X			
Engage a Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certified Professional to evaluate all customer service areas to improve accessibility.		X		
Draft a Township policy on Inclusion, Diversity, Accessibility, and Equity.			X	
Consider establishing an Inclusion, Diversity, Accessibility, and Equity Committee.				X
Identify audio/visual enhancements for Council Chambers.			X	
Enhance accessibility to municipal elections processes.			X	
Implement electronic development application process.				X
Develop an integrated parking management strategy that expands and modernizes accessible parking.		X		
Add audible crossing tones at all signalized and flashing crossings with locator tones, and audible messages.			X	
Install adaptive playground equipment in parks.	X			
Procure adaptive equipment for recreation programming and facilities.	X			
Implement visual fire alarms.				X
Install automatic door openers and emergency help buttons for accessible washrooms.	X			
Conduct an accessible/universal washroom audit.		X		
Establish flexible customer service reception areas.			X	
Install chair lift outside of Municipal Hall.			X	
Add audio to the elevator at Municipal Hall to improve wayfinding.	X			

# DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS

Accessibility Plan



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS

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### Introduction

The District of Highlands (Highlands) is a rural community with a population of approximately 2500 residents and is located in the traditional territories of the Ləkʷəŋən, SENĆOŦEN and Hul'q'umi'num speaking First Nations with whom we are committed to building stronger working relationships

The Highlands is primarily residential, rural in nature, with scenic beauty, native plant and animal life, and public parkland. Residents place high value on a sustainable natural environment and rural lifestyle and are actively involved in the community, fostering self-reliance and cooperation.

By focusing on accessibility, we are working towards becoming a municipality where every person is able to participate fully and equally and is empowered to pursue the life they wish to live.

The Highlands has evaluated the accessibility of our municipality to aid in determining what we have accomplished and what we need to explore.

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## What We Have Done (Past)

<b>Requirement of the Act</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joined the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Information and Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created an Accessibility page on our website.</li> <li>• Created accessibility@highlands.ca to gather input from our residents regarding accessibility.</li> <li>• Implemented social media accounts adding additional opportunities to communicate with residents.</li> <li>• Implemented a meeting management software to provide easy access and search functions to agendas and minutes.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated public participation at our Council meetings via Zoom.</li> <li>• Provide several payment options including e-transfers.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sit-stand options at staff workspaces.</li> </ul>
<b>Built Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have two counter heights to enable access for those with mobility issues.</li> <li>• Have accessible washrooms at both the District office and community hall.</li> <li>• Have an automatic door opener at the Highlands community hall.</li> <li>• Have accessible access (with ramps at some locations) to municipal facilities.</li> <li>• Community offered a low-cost program by the Volunteer Firefighters Association to provide, plan, and install reflective address signs to enable first responders to locate properties in an emergency.</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlands Emergency Program in conjunction with Highlands District Community Association implemented a neighbourhood preparedness program providing information, training and skills for individuals and neighbourhoods to be self-sufficient after a disaster.</li> </ul>

## What We Are Doing (Present)

<b>Information and Communications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exploring a website refresh to meet “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines”, providing alternative text, language translation, improving tablet and cell phone orientation, and other accessibility options.</li></ul>
<b>Built Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considering accessibility in facility space planning.</li></ul>

## What We Plan To Do (Future)

It will take time to lessen barriers, however the Plan is the first step in identifying how we can improve accessibility going forward.

The Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee focus is on the first two standards of the Accessibility. BC.Act: Employment and Service Delivery. To improve accessibility in these areas the District of Highlands has identified areas to expand on or explore.

<b>Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review interview and hiring practices to ensure we are inclusive and accessible.</li><li>• Develop a process for workplace accommodation.</li></ul>
<b>Service Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore options to stream/record Council, Committee of the Whole, and Public Hearings.</li><li>• Explore electronic building permit application submission software.</li></ul>
<b>Built Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exploring options for installation of an automatic door opener at the District office.</li></ul>

Education plays an important role in understanding and eliminating barriers. Staff and Council accessibility awareness and technical training is a priority.

In conclusion, the intent of the District of Highlands Accessibility Plan is to deliver inclusive services and be a community where every person can participate fully and equally.



# CITY OF LANGFORD

Accessibility Plan

CITY OF  
**Langford**

# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## CITY OF LANGFORD

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### Enhancing Accessibility in Langford: A Way Forward

This is the City of Langford’s first formal Accessibility Plan. This document, drafted in consultation with the public, accessibility consultants, the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee, and City staff strives to bring accessibility into all conversations at the municipal level, recognizing that the City is a place for all to feel welcome and valued.

This Accessibility Plan will guide the City’s projects, strategic planning efforts, and day-to-day operations.

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As described earlier in the Plan, the *Accessible BC Act* outlines eight objectives that municipalities must address over time:

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

While this initial plan addresses the following two objectives, Employment and Service Delivery, it is important to note that there are impacts on several of the other objectives not specifically targeted:

## **Objective 1: Employment**

The City prides itself on being a diverse, inclusive, and equitable employer. As such, it is important for City employees to have the required training, support and policies to carry out their duties efficiently.

## **Objective 2: Delivery of Services**

“Service Delivery” is an all-encompassing term for all goods and services provided by the municipality, and how the public interacts with them.

### **Core Values and Strategic Plan Alignment**

As presented in Council’s 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, the following core values support this Accessibility Plan as the City moves forward:

**Community Involvement** embodies inclusivity, collective progress, and active democracy. It is the commitment to engaging with the community, valuing every voice, and fostering equality. By going further together, we forge unity through diverse participation. Communicating democratic ideals of fairness and shared decision-making.

**Continuous Learning** is an ongoing and lifelong pursuit of knowledge, skills, and personal and organizational development. It involves staying receptive to new ideas, adapting to changing

circumstances, and consistently acquiring fresh insights. This process fosters adaptability, growth, and improvement.

As accessibility work continues in Langford, inclusivity, education, engagement, and adaptability will remain important aspects of ensuring the community needs are met.

**Strategic Initiative 6G “Develop and Implement an Accessibility Plan”** The Accessible BC Act requires all local governments to develop an Accessibility Committee and Accessibility Plan, and to provide a tool to receive feedback on accessibility concerns within the community. The City is working in collaboration with neighbouring communities on these requirements to ensure the unique needs of Langford’s residents and visitors are met.

This plan has been developed through feedback received including surveys and engagement opportunities and meets Strategic Initiative 6G as outlined above. Throughout the document, alignment with Council strategic priorities are referenced.

## Priority 1: Employment

The City of Langford is dedicated to fostering an equitable, inclusive, and diverse workplace that addresses the needs of its staff. The City is enhancing the integration of accessibility practices across all areas of employment, from application to onboarding. Langford offers a chance for meaningful work that supports a diverse and vibrant community.

### What We Have Done (Past)

Strategic Plan  
Alignment: 6G

Develop and  
Implement an  
Accessibility Plan

- Offers the Option of Virtual Interviews When Recruiting New Employees: Virtual interviews are offered to accommodate a variety of needs.
- Provides Sit-stand Desks at Most Working Spaces Within City Hall: Sit-stand desks are standard within City Hall providing users with a personalized and adaptable experience.

### What We Are Doing (Present)

The City has been working toward implementation of the following accessibility solutions:

Strategic Plan  
Alignment: 5

Good Governance

- Developing Report Writing Standards and Training for Staff: The City is preparing report writing training that includes the use of plain language and accessibility standards.

### What We May Explore (Future)

To improve the City's accessible employment model, all feedback has been reviewed, and the organization is dedicated to continual learning, and adopting standards and tools that support a diverse, adaptable workforce committed to serving the community.

## Priority 2: Service Delivery

Providing services in the City of Langford reflects a dedication to: Providing the services our residents need and want, Delivering services in a helpful and courteous manner, Assisting all individuals in a meaningful way that addresses and accommodates their unique needs.

### What We Have Done (Past)

The City has implemented the following pertaining to accessible service delivery:

**Strategic Plan  
Alignment: 5**

**Good Governance**

- Implemented Closed Captioning Capability on Council and Committee Meeting Recordings: Council, Committee, and Board meetings hosted in the City of Langford Council Chambers now have the ability for viewers to see live closed captioning during meetings and in the recordings.
- Online Payment Capability for Parking Infractions: Langford offers an online payment module for members of the public to pay parking infractions. This module can be accessed through the City website.
- Burning Permits, Campfire Permits, and Fireworks Permit Exams Available Online: Langford offers an online module to obtain a Campfire or Burning Permit. Fireworks exams are also offered online through the City's website.

## What We Have Done (Past) - Continued

### Strategic Plan Alignment: 6G

### Develop and Implement an Accessibility Plan

- **Joined the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee:** The City of Langford worked alongside partner municipalities to bring the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee forward. Langford served as the host municipality for the Committee's inaugural year providing meeting Chair duties and administrative support.
- **Removed the Front Row of Chairs in Council Chambers to Create Space for Mobility Devices:** The front row of chairs closest to the doors in Council Chambers have been removed to create a welcoming and accessible space for wheelchairs and other mobility devices.
- **Installed Screens at Council and Staff Seats in Chambers to View Presentations:** Screens to display presentations were installed at every Council and Staff seat to enhance accessibility.
- **Purchased Assistive Tools for Use at Reception and Public Facing Areas:** Purchased signing and cheque writing guides and magnifying glasses to assist individuals.
- **Created a Page on the City Of Langford Website to Share Information About Accessibility and the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee:** The City maintains a dedicated webpage focused on promoting and enhancing accessibility in Langford.
- **Created a dedicated Email Address to Receive Accessibility Correspondence from the Public:** As required by the Accessible BC Act, the City has set up a feedback mechanism for the public to use ([accessibility@langford.ca](mailto:accessibility@langford.ca)). In addition, the City works with individuals to provide alternate solutions for receiving feedback.
- **Implemented an Accessibility Menu on the Website:** The City has implemented an accessibility tool (UserWay) within the website that customizes the experience on the website based on selections made by the user.

## What We Have Done (Past) - Continued

Strategic Plan  
Alignment: 6G  
  
Develop and  
Implement an  
Accessibility Plan

- Created Standards for Social Media Posts and Promotional Materials Through an Accessibility Lens: When developing promotional materials for the City, contrast, adequate text size, and appropriate fonts are considered in development. Social media platforms include accessibility features that can be customized to the needs of each specific user offering an accessible and familiar experience.
- Completed a Website Accessibility Audit: Based on the WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliance criteria, the previous version of the City website was rated as semi-compliant. To address this, the City of Langford conducted a series of comprehensive updates aimed at achieving full WCAG 2.0 AA compliance. These updates included improvements to font readability, color contrast adjustments, and the addition of appropriate image tagging. Additionally, general code revisions were made to ensure the website is easily navigable by screen readers.

## Priority 2: Service Delivery - Continued

### What We Have Done (Past)

#### Strategic Plan Alignment: 3D

#### – Implement the Five-Year Tourism Strategy

- Partnered With 4VI to Produce Accessible Travel Guides: To best serve travellers of all abilities, 4VI, together with Spinal Cord Injury BC (SCIBC) and the City of Langford, developed travel information guides featuring accessible tourism products available within the City for those with physical mobility considerations or other barriers.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment: 5C – Expand Opportunities of Public Engagement

- City Surveys Provided in Multiple Formats: While the Let’s Chat Langford platform hosts many of the City’s surveys, they are also available on paper or can be mailed or emailed to promote participation.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment: 1G – Develop an Urban Forest Management Plan

- Designed Accessible and Inclusive Engagement Materials for the Urban Forest Management Plan: Throughout the Urban Forest Management Plan development process, the City utilized an inclusive and accessible approach to public engagement.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment: 1A – Refresh the Official Community Plan (OCP)

- Designed Accessible Public Engagement Materials for the Official Community Plan Refresh: The Official Community Plan Refresh engagement materials were designed to be inclusive, accessible, and interactive to allow for diverse participation.

#### Strategic Plan Alignment: 1A – Refresh the Official Community Plan (OCP)

- Included Accessibility Considerations When Drafting the Official Community Plan Refresh and Engagement Materials: The Official Community Plan is the long-term vision for the community expressed through objectives and policies about land use and development. The Refresh places importance on equity and accessibility for all residents. When creating engagement materials, accessibility needs were considered. Accessibility related feedback will form an important component of the policy choices being considered as part of the OCP Refresh.

## Priority 2: Service Delivery - Continued

### What We Have Done (Past)

**Strategic Plan Alignment: 1F – Develop a Construction Impact Management**

**Strategy and “Good Neighbour Policy”**

- Implemented Construction Licences to Ensure Accessibility and Continued Access to Public Areas: The City requires developers wishing to utilize the road right-of-way for their exclusive use for a period of time to apply for a Construction Licence which includes provisions to minimize accessibility impacts to sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use lanes, parking stalls, and vehicle lanes.

**Strategic Plan Alignment: 6F - Develop and Implement a Placemaking Strategy**

- Designed Inclusive Banners for Streetlights: The City produced streetlight banners that were installed throughout Langford that represent the diverse community.

**Strategic Plan Alignment: 4A – Develop a Transportation Master Plan**

- Included Accessibility Considerations When Drafting the Active Transportation Plan and Transportation Master Plan Scope of Work: When drafting the Active Transportation Plan and Transportation Master Plan scope of work, the City ensured that a variety of accessibility needs were incorporated.

**Strategic Plan Alignment: 6A**  
**Undertake a Parks Needs Assessment**

- Added Accessible Picnic Benches and Resting Places Throughout City Parks: Picnic tables designed for accessibility enable people to position their mobility devices right at the table.
- New Signs at Jordie Lunn Bike Park to Indicate Terrain Difficulty and Key Information: Signage has been installed that recommends needed skill level, expected features, and directionality to help users determine which trail network suits their needs.

**Strategic Plan Alignment: 2C**  
**Review and Action the Food Security Policy as Detailed in the OCP**

- Included Accessibility Considerations in the Community Garden Policy: The Community Garden Policy indicates that a minimum of 10% of garden plots will be designed to include accessible features including but not limited to raised garden beds and pathing that allows for mobility devices.

## Priority 2: Service Delivery - Continued

### What We Are Doing (Present)

The City has been working toward implementation of the following accessibility solutions:

<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment:</b> <b>5C - Expand Opportunities for Public Engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Designing and Implementing a Public Engagement Strategy:</b> Standards have been created to enhance accessibility within public engagement opportunities.</li> <li>• <b>Improving Paper Copies of City Surveys:</b> The City is researching ways to improve the format of paper surveys in order to meet accessibility standards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 6G</b> <b>Develop and Implement an Accessibility Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Creating an Accessibility Checklist for City Events:</b> A checklist is being created to ensure accessibility needs are considered when designing and facilitating City led events.</li> <li>• <b>Producing Accessible Documents for Public Use:</b> When creating new forms, print materials, and online documents, the City considers accessibility features including font type, size, contrast, and alternate text.</li> <li>• <b>Improving Search Categorization on the Langford Website to Improve User Experience:</b> The City is actively working on a solution to improve search functionality on the website.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment:</b> <b>1F – Develop a Construction Impact Management Strategy and “Good Neighbour Policy”</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Considering Accessibility Needs When Drafting the Construction Impact Management Strategy and Good Neighbour Policy:</b> The Construction Impact Management Strategy and Good Neighbour Policy will consider accessibility needs in areas undergoing development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 6A – Undertake a Parks Needs Assessment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Creating Accessible Features Within Existing and New Recreational Spaces and Parks:</b> When planning new parks, playgrounds, and recreational spaces, accessible features are being added in the concept and design phase.</li> </ul>

## Priority 2A: Staff and/or Council Training

The City of Langford is aware that the sections above do not encompass all needs and feedback received through the Committee’s consultation process. To address these gaps, accessibility needs will inform the City’s projects, strategic plan initiatives, and day to day operations.

### What We May Explore (Future)

The City will consider implementing the following regarding accessibility within the objective of Staff and/or Council Training:

**Strategic Plan  
Alignment: 5  
Good Governance**

- Provide Additional Training Opportunities for Council and Staff Including but not Limited to Accessibility Topics and Service Delivery: The City may provide training opportunities for Council and staff to enhance skills and explore opportunities to improve accessibility.
- Provide Funding for Staff to Complete the Rick Hansen Accessible Spaces Certification or Other Accessibility Training Opportunities: The City may offer training opportunities to staff who wish to further their education and credentials pertaining to accessibility.
- Provide Accessible Document Creation and Communications Training for Staff: When developing forms, documents, and communications on behalf of the City, specific training may be provided to staff to ensure that accessibility needs are considered.

## Priority 2B: Technological Improvements or Enhancements

The City of Langford is evaluating the implementation of the following measures to enhance accessibility as part of its technological upgrades:

<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 5</b></p> <p><b>Good Governance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Accessibility Improvements to the Technology in Council Chambers:</b> The City may consider improvements such as the installation of a hearing loop, closed captioning enhancements, podium wiring, and general functionality improvements that enhance public participation in Council Chambers.</li><li>• <b>Digital Upgrades and Regular Audits of the City’s Website to Promote and Enhance Accessibility:</b> In order to provide an accessible and user-friendly experience, the City’s website will continue to receive audits and updates.</li><li>• <b>Review and Improve Access to the City Website on Mobile Devices:</b> The City might consider updates to its mobile website to improve user experience and accessibility.</li><li>• <b>Revise City Produced Documents in Order to Meet Accessibility Standards:</b> The City may update print materials, brochures, templates, and official municipal documents to meet accessibility standards.</li></ul>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 6A</b></p> <p><b>Undertake a Parks Needs Assessment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Design and Install Informational Signage at Parks, Trails, and Playgrounds:</b> Additional signage may be designed and installed to provide users with information about parks, trails, playgrounds, or recreational spaces.</li></ul>

### What We Are Doing (Present)

The City of Langford is aware that the sections above do not encompass all needs and feedback received through the Committee’s consultation process. To address these gaps, accessibility needs will inform the City’s projects, strategic plan initiatives, and day to day operations.

## Priority 2C: Policy and Procedure Related to Accessibility

The City of Langford will consider implementing the following regarding accessibility within the objective of policy and procedures:

### What We May Explore (Future)

**Strategic Plan Alignment: 5**  
**Good Governance**

- Research Online Payment Options for Municipal Fees and Taxes: Self-service modules and additional online payment options may be explored for a variety of municipal fees and property taxes.

**Strategic Plan Alignment 2E**  
**Develop an Overarching Disaster Mitigation**  
**Strategy with Respect to Climate Change and Build Resiliency as a Community**  
**Based on Specific Initiatives**

- Consider Accessibility Needs as the Disaster Mitigation Strategy Processes are Developed: Accessibility needs will be considered in the development of the Disaster Mitigation Strategy and accompanying programs and public engagement opportunities.
- Purchase, Upgrade, or Replace Specialized Equipment and Emergency Response Programming and Procedures That Reflect the Needs of the Community: While the City complies with emergency response requirements, new equipment, programming, procedures, processes, technology, and tools may be explored that benefit the community.

## The Built Environment

Through public engagement, it became clear that further awareness is needed with respect to the difference between a municipal service and the built environment (on-street parking, sidewalks, signage, facilities, etc.). The following section is intended to highlight both current initiatives and future goals with respect to the built environment.

Throughout public consultation, respondents discussed accessible parking issues including but not limited to: Accessible parking spot sizes (dimensions), Accessible parking locations and Accessible parking minimums

The City of Langford understands that parking needs greatly impact residents and visitors which is why parking is mentioned numerous times within the Strategic Plan. The BC Building Code acknowledges accessible parking, and as required, the City will defer to the BC Building Code for on-site parking requirements at non-municipal facilities.

Through parking reviews, the City may make recommendations and decisions regarding accessible parking, and parking minimums.

### What We've Done (Past)

While outside of the scope of this initial Accessibility Plan, the City has implemented the following pertaining to the built environment:

#### Strategic Plan Alignment: 3F Create an Arts and Culture Strategic Plan

- Commissioned an Accessibility Audit on the Langford Station Cultural District: The Langford Station Cultural District underwent an accessibility audit in 2023. The recommendations within are being actioned by staff in order to make the space more accessible for all, including the addition of ramps for use by visitors and vendors.
- Installed an Accessible Washroom at The Langford Station Cultural District: An accessible washroom facility was built at The Langford Station Cultural District for use by the public.

What We've Done (Past) - Continued	
<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment</b></p> <p><b>4C Improve and Expand Active Transportation Infrastructure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Sidewalk Inspection and Repair Program: Each year, Engineering staff inspect sidewalks throughout the City for damage and possible improvements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4C Improve and Expand Active Transportation Infrastructure</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 3F</b></p> <p><b>Create an Arts and Culture Strategic Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioned an Accessibility Audit on the Langford Station Cultural District: The Langford Station Cultural District underwent an accessibility audit in 2023. The recommendations within are being actioned by staff in order to make the space more accessible for all, including the addition of ramps for use by visitors and vendors.</li> <li>• Installed an Accessible Washroom at The Langford Station Cultural District: An accessible washroom facility was built at The Langford Station Cultural District for use by the public.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 4C</b></p> <p><b>Improve and Expand Active Transportation Infrastructure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Sidewalk Inspection and Repair Program: Each year, Engineering staff inspect sidewalks throughout the City for damage and possible improvements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 6G</b></p> <p><b>Develop and Implement an Accessibility Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reception Area and Public Facing Upgrades Within City Hall That Promote Accessibility and Respond to Diverse Needs: The renovated reception area will include accessibility features such as varying counter heights.</li> <li>• Installed Motion Activated Automatic Doors at City Hall's Second Floor Entrance: The doors to City Hall on the second floor can be opened by a motion activated panel to enhance accessibility.</li> <li>• Installed an Intercom Speaker at the Public Doors at Fire Hall No. 1 to Assist Visitors: The installation of an intercom system provides an accessible audio alternative for those visiting Fire Hall No. 1 to speak with administration.</li> </ul>

## What We're Doing (Present)

While outside of the scope of this initial Accessibility Plan, the City has been working toward implementation of the following accessibility solutions:

<b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 4C</b> <b>Improve and Expand Active Transportation Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adding Sidewalks to Previously Unfinished Road Shoulders or Frontage Through the Sidewalk Infill Program: Through the Sidewalk Infill Program, the City continues to improve accessibility and connectivity throughout Langford.</li></ul>
<b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 4C</b> <b>Improve and Expand Active Transportation Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adding Sidewalks to Previously Unfinished Road Shoulders or Frontage Through the Sidewalk Infill Program: Through the Sidewalk Infill Program, the City continues to improve accessibility and connectivity throughout Langford.</li></ul>
<b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 4A</b> <b>Develop a Transportation Master Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accessibility Condition Assessments will be Conducted on Existing Transportation Infrastructure When Drafting the Active Transportation Plan and Transportation Master Plan: When drafting the Active Transportation Plan and Transportation Master Plan, the condition of existing transportation infrastructure will be assessed for users of all ages, stages, and abilities.</li></ul>
<b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 3F</b> <b>Create an Arts and Culture Strategic Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improvements to the Accessible Parking Area as Identified in The Langford Station Cultural District Accessibility Audit: Improvements such as paving and widening are underway at the Langford Station Cultural District accessible parking area.</li></ul>

## What We May Explore (Future)

While outside of the scope of this initial Accessibility Plan, the City will consider implementing the following regarding accessibility within the built environment:

<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 6G</b> <b>Develop and Implement an Accessibility Plan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Conduct an Accessibility Audit on the City Hall Workspaces, Public Spaces, and Municipal Facilities:</b> To provide the best service, the City may retain an accessibility consultant to provide recommendation for improvement.</li><li>• <b>Accessibility Improvements to Municipal Facilities That Enhance Public Participation, Access, and Useability:</b> The City is committed to improving access and useability to increase participation in municipal initiatives and receive input from all individuals.</li><li>• <b>Upgrades and Renovations to Provide Accessible Washrooms in Municipal Facilities:</b> Features may be installed to provide accessible washrooms within municipal facilities.</li></ul>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 5</b> <b>Good Governance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Improvements to Council Chambers That Enhance Physical Access and Participation:</b> Features within Council Chambers that enhance physical accessibility and promote diverse participation may be considered including but not limited to, renovations and new furniture.</li></ul>
<p><b>Strategic Plan Alignment: 6A</b> <b>Undertake a Parks Needs Assessment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Enhance Physical Accessibility Within Parks and Trail Networks:</b> The City may explore the addition of accessible features such as boardwalks, grade softening, wider trails, and railings. Trails and parks may include accessible features such as wider trails</li><li>• <b>Install Accessible Surfacing or Replace Existing Surfacing Where Possible:</b> Where possible, the City may install rubberized surfacing, pavement, or other recognized accessible options in parks, trails, recreational spaces, and municipal facilities.</li></ul>

## What We May Explore (Future) - Continued

### Strategic Plan Alignment: 6F

#### Develop and Implement a Placemaking Strategy

- Updated Wayfinding Signage: Signage and wayfinding tools such as braille and audio signage may be considered throughout the City.

## General Accessibility Feedback

While this Accessibility Plan focuses on **Service Delivery** and **Employment**, public engagement opportunities provided further information regarding additional accessibility aspects.

The following are examples of general accessibility feedback that was collected through public engagement that does not fall within the scope of this initial Accessibility Plan:

### Strategic Plan Alignment: 5A

#### Be at the Table for Strategic Regional Discussions and Decisions

- Advocate to Other Levels of Government for the Promotion and Enhancement of Accessibility: In order to reach the City's goal of becoming a barrier free community, advocacy may be required through inter-governmental discussions and meeting opportunities.
- Look for Opportunities to Collaborate and Work With Neighbouring Local Governments to Promote and Enhance Accessibility: Opportunities may arise with neighbouring local governments to work collaboratively in order to promote cohesive accessibility needs.

### Strategic Plan Alignment: 6A

#### Undertake a Parks Needs Assessment

- Work With Recreational Partners to Provide Options That Promote Accessibility and Diverse Programming: When collaborating with recreational partners, think about improvements and cooperative efforts that can enhance accessibility.

### Strategic Plan Alignment: 6G

#### Develop and Implement an Accessibility Plan

- Hiring Consultants to Provide Advice and Complete Work That Promotes or Enhances Accessibility on Behalf of the Municipality: The City may benefit from working with professional consultants as required. Strategic partnerships can help the City complete work quickly and accurately.

## Conclusion

This Accessibility Plan will be reviewed by the City in collaboration with the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee every three years.

Working alongside our municipal partners within the Capital West Accessibility Committee, accessibility consideration will continue to be a priority of the City. The accessibility feedback mechanism, [accessibility@langford.ca](mailto:accessibility@langford.ca) remains available for use. Comments and feedback will be reviewed and responded to accordingly.

The City aims to foster and advance accessibility, continually working toward the objective of creating a community without barriers.

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# DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN

Accessibility Plan



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN

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### 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.

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## **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 and 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:

1. Staff and/or Council Training;
2. Technological;
3. Physical Space; and
4. 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**.

## What We've Done (Past)

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:

<b>Standard 1: Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provided opportunities for virtual interviews during the recruitment process.</li><li>• Installed Bluetooth compatibility device in the Council Chambers.</li><li>• Installed new phone system in the Municipal Hall with voicemail transcription to email and hearing aid compatibility.</li><li>• Provided physical workspace accommodations such as sit-stand desks.</li><li>• Initiated remote work capabilities.</li><li>• Implemented a Respectful Workplace Policy to elevate awareness around discrimination.</li></ul>
<b>Standard 2: Service Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joined the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee (CWAAC).</li><li>• Created an “Accessibility” information page on the District of Metchosin website to share information about the CWAAC, the Accessibility Plan, and public engagement opportunities.</li><li>• Established the <a href="mailto:accessibility@metchosin.ca">accessibility@metchosin.ca</a> email address as the District’s dedicated public feedback tool on accessibility.</li><li>• Implemented a new District of Metchosin website that is compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) standards.</li><li>• Implemented live-streamed Council and Standing Committee meetings.</li><li>• Conducted an internal accessibility audit of municipal facilities to identify barriers around access.</li><li>• Installed lighted crosswalks on Happy Valley Road and Rocky Point Road at the Galloping Goose crossings.</li><li>• Installed a new crosswalk on Happy Valley Road in the village centre.</li><li>• Installed new fully accessible washrooms at Metchosin School.</li><li>• Updated fire alarm system at Metchosin School to strobe light/visual alarms.</li><li>• Installed a new accessible door at Metchosin Community House.</li><li>• Installed accessibility handlebars in the Firehall washrooms.</li><li>• Replaced florescent lighting with LED lighting at the Firehall.</li><li>• Provided American Sign Language (ASL) training to Fire Department first responders.</li></ul>

## What We're Doing (Present)

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

<b>Standard 1: Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initiating feedback mechanisms for employee input on individual needs and accommodations.</li><li>• Incorporating funding into the Five Year Financial Plan for employee accessibility awareness training.</li></ul>
<b>Standard 2: Service Delivery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applying an accessibility lens through the development of an Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP).</li><li>• Installing a new sound system in the Municipal Hall Council Chambers to enhance inclusivity and accessibility to Council and Standing Committee meetings.</li><li>• Implementing TEAMS video integration for electronic Council and Standing Committee meetings.</li><li>• Upgrading outdoor lighting in the Municipal Hall parking lot.</li><li>• Repainting existing accessible parking spaces at District facilities.</li><li>• Applying an accessibility lens to the Emergency Program evacuation and emergency planning.</li><li>• Enhancing the Metchosin Fire Department website for improved accessibility.</li><li>• Implementing accessible communication tools through the Metchosin Fire Department to ensure that emergency alerts are accessible to all residents.</li><li>• Investigating a new accessible entrance to Metchosin School.</li></ul>

## What We May Explore (Future)

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:

### Standard 1: Employment

**Goal: Establish an inclusive and supportive workplace environment that empowers all employees to contribute and thrive:**

1. Promote employee engagement to better understand barriers and needs in the workplace.
2. Develop accommodation policies to ensure accommodations are made for employees with disabilities.
3. Explore general accessibility awareness training options that will be offered to all employees.
4. Ensure training webinars and other online training opportunities for employees provide options for closed captioning or hard copy materials.
5. Invest time and resources into customizing workstations for employees prioritizing existing barriers.

**Goal: Establish equitable employment practices and strategies for minimizing barriers in employment and volunteering:**

1. Review employment and volunteering recruitment practices to promote equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility and to minimize barriers.
2. Update job postings and volunteer opportunity templates to improve accessibility including format and language that welcomes all abilities.
3. Establish procedures to provide accommodations for persons with disabilities during the recruitment process.

## What We May Explore (Future)

### Standard 2: Service Delivery

#### 1. Staff and/or Council Training

**Goal: Promote staff and/or Council knowledge of supporting persons with disabilities when interacting in or with the municipality:**

1. Provide staff and/or Council awareness training around accessibility-related topics.
2. Provide staff training to ensure the District's website content is compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0).
3. Provide additional staff training related to:
  - Accessible document creation;
  - Accessible electronic form creation; and
  - Alternate text creation and usage.
4. Continue American Sign Language (ASL) training to first responders

#### 2. Technological

**Goal: Ensure communications materials and systems are accessible:**

1. Ensure content and forms published on the District website are accessible and meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0).
2. Ensure District surveys, forms and communication materials are accessible and provided in multiple accessible formats.
3. Set guidelines for written materials that promote accessible writing.
4. Enhance the District's photo library to include inclusive images for communication materials.
5. Ensure timely notice of community meetings and events.

## What We May Explore (Future) - Continued

### 2. Technological

**Goal: Improve access to District public meetings:**

1. Identify and address gaps in access to Council and Committee meetings for persons with accessibility needs (i.e., electronic participation in meetings).
2. Enhance electronic meeting participation by implementing closed captioning during live-streamed and recorded Council and Committee meetings.
3. Consider installing a hearing loop system in the Council Chambers.

**Goal: Provide inclusive and accessible services and programs that cater to the diverse needs of the community:**

1. Implement online payment options for property taxes, business licenses, and permits.
2. Implement mail ballot voting as an additional voting opportunity in future General Local Elections.

### 3. Physical Space

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

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).
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).
3. Utilize the future recommendations from the Firehall Feasibility Study to advise on the planning of the Fire Hall.
4. Conduct an audit of the accessible washroom in the Municipal Hall to identify barriers and improve accessibility.

## What We May Explore (Future) - Continued

### 3. Physical Space

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

1. 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.
2. Ensure appropriate space in Council Chambers for wheelchairs and mobility devices including appropriate accessible seating with/without arms.
3. Update smoke alarms in municipal facilities to strobe light/visual smoke alarms.

### Standard 2: Service Delivery

### 4. Policy Procedure and Plans

**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**

1. Review and update the Accessibility Plan every three years.
2. Continue to receive and review feedback on accessibility achievements and areas of improvement.
3. Explore opportunities to build accessibility into District policies and procedures.
4. Uphold accessibility standards and regulations during the planning phases of municipal policies, procedures, programs, services, and public spaces.
5. Apply an accessibility lens when developing or updating District Plans and ensure public engagement/consultation opportunities.
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.
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](mailto:accessibility@metchosin.ca).

## Contact Us

The District welcomes feedback on accessibility in the following ways:

**Email:** [accessibility@metchosin.ca](mailto:accessibility@metchosin.ca)

**Phone:** 250-474-3167

**Mail/Delivery:** 4450 Happy Valley Rd, Victoria, BC V9C 3Z3

# DISTRICT OF SOOKE

Accessibility Plan



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## DISTRICT OF SOOKE

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### Introduction

The District of Sooke, incorporated in 1999 and located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, is part of the Capital Regional District. Sooke serves as a service and cultural hub for neighboring communities including Otter Point, Shirley, and Jordan River. With a population of approximately 16,000, Sooke is known for its natural beauty, vibrant arts community, and West Coast charm. Guided by our strategic commitment to community well-being, infrastructure investment, and social inclusion, this Accessibility Plan lays the foundation for an equitable future under the *Accessible British Columbia Act*.

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**LONG-TERM GOAL:**  
*Sooke is striving to be an inclusive, healthy,  
and self-sufficient community.*

## **Accessibility in Sooke**

The District of Sooke retained the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) to conduct an Accessibility and Inclusion Study, which formed the foundation for a community-wide plan focused on three key issue areas:

1. Municipal Policies and Practices
2. Physical Accessibility
3. Volunteering and Employment

The process was informed by the lived experiences of people with disabilities, and included representation from local community groups and disability-serving organizations. Stakeholder engagement played a critical role in identifying existing barriers and shaping recommendations for a more accessible and inclusive community.

The study emphasized that achieving meaningful participation requires addressing both accessibility and inclusion. Accessibility involves removing barriers, particularly in the built environment, but also in systems, communication, and policies. As advocates note, “accessibility is what gets you in the room.” Inclusion goes a step further, it means that once you’re in the room, your presence, participation, and contributions are welcomed, respected, and valued.

Sooke strives to be an inclusive, healthy, and self-sufficient community, in line with its Strategic Plan. Recognizing the diversity of identities, abilities, and cultural backgrounds, including the District’s relationship with Indigenous partners, Sooke is committed to advancing equity across all areas of municipal governance and service delivery.

At present, structural inequities remain. Not everyone in the community has the same access to public services, infrastructure, or opportunities for participation. The District is committed to continuing its analysis of policies and practices to understand who benefits, and who may be excluded, so that it can take meaningful, data-informed action toward a more just and accessible Sooke.

## Strategic Plan Alignment

The Accessibility Plan aligns with Sooke’s 2024–2027 Strategic Objectives:

**Community Safety and Wellbeing:** Connected, inclusive community life and social support systems.

**Organizational Development:** Equitable workplaces and accessible service delivery.

**Infrastructure and Mobility:** Investments that prioritize universal design and active transportation

## The Regulation

The Accessible BC Act includes eight standards:

1. Employment
2. Delivery of services
3. Built environment
4. Information and communications
5. Transportation
6. Health
7. Education
8. Procurement

This initial Plan focuses on employment and service delivery, forming the basis for education and awareness training to support an inclusive and accessible workplace and service delivery model. The following information outlines Sooke’s past (“A. What We’ve Done”), present (“B. What We’re Doing”), and future initiatives and actions (“C. What We May Explore”) to achieve the Plan for these two priority areas of employment and service delivery.

## Conclusion

The District of Sooke is committed to improving accessibility across services, facilities, and the community. While progress has been made, continued effort is needed to remove barriers and create equitable access for all.

This plan supports the District’s strategic vision of an inclusive, healthy, and self-sufficient community, where everyone feels respected, welcomed, and able to thrive.

## What We've Done (Past)

### Governance and Advisory

- Completed Accessibility and Inclusion Study in collaboration with SPARC BC
- Organized Accessibility Challenge with Measuring Up Advisory Committee
- Joined the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee (CWAAC)

### Digital and Communication Accessibility

- Created public-facing Accessibility Webpage on District website
- Launched [accessibility@sooke.ca](mailto:accessibility@sooke.ca) for public feedback and inquiries
- Provided online fillable forms (e.g., building permits, business licenses, etc.)
- Enabled remote payment options for District services
- Livestreamed and archived Council and Committee meetings
- Conducted community engagement using plain language, visual aids, and multiple formats (print, digital, phone, in-person)
- Hosted hybrid public engagement events (in-person and virtual) to ensure broad participation

### Employment and Workplace Accommodations

- Offered remote and hybrid work options to employees
- Provided ergonomic assessments and sit/stand desks
- Implemented flexible return-to-work program for staff recovering from illness or injury

## What We've Done (Past)

### Planning, Parks and Infrastructure

- Constructed paved accessible pathway at Ed MacGregor Park
- Installed accessible washroom in Council Chambers
- Installed accessible washroom at Whiffin Spit Park
- Installed accessible picnic table at MacGregor Park and Pineridge Park
- Installed accessible pathway and extended picnic table at Broomhill Park
- Installed hearing loop system in Council Chambers
- Added accessible parking at Whiffin Spit and MacGregor Park
- Installed accessible signage and maps at Municipal Hall
- Incorporated universal design standards into some District trails as per the 2020 Parks and Trails Master Plan
- Responded to resident request to install an additional bench on a trail section to improve accessibility
- Ensured accessible design standards in trail and park planning (e.g., trail grades, surfaces, spacing)
- Installed accessible walkways, parking, and washrooms at John Philips Memorial Park
- Installed accessible walkways, parking, and washrooms at Ravens Ridge Park

### Development and Housing Accessibility

- Applied active transportation considerations (e.g., sidewalks, transit) in development application reviews
- Applied housing covenants at time of rezoning to secure a percentage of adaptable housing units for aging in place or renovations for accessibility
- Reviewed development and building applications for interior accessibility layouts and required accessible parking space minimums

## What we are doing (Present)

<p><b>Governance and Advisory</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing coordination with the Capital Regional District (CRD) in transportation planning includes accessibility considerations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital and Communication Accessibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The District’s new website is being designed to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards, supporting users with a range of abilities and devices</li> </ul>
<p><b>Employment and Workplace Accommodations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued ergonomic assessments and equipment support for staff</li> <li>• Discussing meeting and potential accommodation requirements when coordinating interviews</li> </ul>
<p><b>Planning, Parks and Infrastructure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing implementation of active transportation infrastructure per the District’s Transportation Master Plan</li> <li>• Eliminating stairs where an accessible trail re-route can be achieved</li> <li>• Providing equitable access to parks</li> <li>• Incorporating universal design standards into park and trail infrastructure where possible based on the 2020 Parks and Trails Master Plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Development and Housing Accessibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating zoning that supports diverse and adaptable housing to meet a wide range of household types, incomes, and accessibility needs</li> <li>• Participating in collaborative networks of community service providers focused on childcare, homelessness, food security, health care, education, public safety, social services, and culture and heritage</li> <li>• Applying an accessibility lens when reviewing development and building applications and policies</li> </ul>

## What we may explore (Future)

The District of Sooke acknowledges that while a number of accessibility improvements have been implemented or are underway, additional opportunities remain to advance equity, inclusion, and full participation for all residents. The following initiatives reflect ideas identified through community and staff input, policy planning processes (including the Official Community Plan), and strategic direction. These actions are not yet committed but may be explored in future planning, budgeting, or operational processes

<b>Governance and Advisory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an accessibility audit of District facilities to assess gaps and prioritize improvements</li> <li>• Review and update the Accessibility and Inclusiveness Study to reflect evolving standards and incorporate equity and intersectionality principles</li> </ul>
<b>Digital and Communication Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate read-aloud or translation plug-ins on District web platforms to support language and literacy accessibility</li> <li>• Produce video storytelling and explainer content to present District information in visual and accessible formats</li> </ul>
<b>Planning, Parks and Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate accessibility standards into park signage, including design elements that improve clarity and usability</li> <li>• Review trail design standards to enhance accessibility, including surfaces, slope, and wayfinding</li> <li>• Describe park and trail experiences (e.g., terrain, slope, surface) to empower users to assess accessibility for their personal needs rather than relying on a generic “accessible” label</li> </ul>
<b>Development and Housing Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the Housing Needs Report by 2028 to explore accessibility-related housing needs, which may inform future policy and bylaw updates</li> </ul>

# TOWN OF VIEW ROYAL

## Accessibility Plan



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## TOWN OF VIEW ROYAL

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### Introduction

View Royal – both directly and indirectly through others – provides municipal services that include infrastructure, recreation, protective services, financial services, arts, bylaw enforcement, emergency planning, human resources, development services (i.e., current and long-range planning and building inspection), economic development, municipal archives, legislative services, elections voting services, communications, governance, and garbage/recycling collection.

These services are often considered through the lens of Council’s six key result areas identified in the Town’s Strategic Plan:

- enhance livability
- sustainable development
- climate action and environmental stewardship
- financial sustainability and service excellence
- community engagement and good governance
- health, safety, and security

The Accessibility Plan is a formal step to broaden the lens of what local government does as View Royal embraces the **long-term goal of striving towards becoming a barrier-free community.**

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## **The Regulation**

The Accessible BC Act includes eight standards:

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

This initial Plan focuses on employment and service delivery, forming the basis for education and awareness training to support an inclusive and accessible workplace and service delivery model.

## **The Plan: An Accessibility Journey**

Peoples' abilities are in a constant state of change throughout their lives and everyone is likely to experience a temporary, periodic, or permanent disability during their lifetime – be it visible or invisible. We all have a role to play in developing a municipal culture where all people feel valued, respected, supported, and welcomed. There is an opportunity to foster inclusion through consultation in the planning of municipal policies, programs, and services as the Town challenges biases and stereotypes about people with disabilities and accessibility more generally.

By changing how we talk and think about disabilities – incorporating accessibility considerations into the general operations of all municipal departments – and by making measured and strategic improvements to accessibility, we will make progress towards our goal. In providing fair access to employment, programs, services, and infrastructure in View Royal, the benefits will be universal to all people who interact with the municipality.

For this first three-year Plan, the Town of View Royal intends for staff to:

- receive foundational training;
- apply an accessibility lens to daily operations; and
- continue to receive and consider public feedback.

The following information outlines View Royal’s past (“A. What We’ve Done”), present (“B. What We’re Doing”), and future initiatives and actions (“C. What We May Explore”) to achieve the Plan for these two priority areas of employment and service delivery.

It should be noted some of the initiatives and actions listed in the Plan may be seen as predominantly addressing one or more of the six other Accessible BC Act standards – for example, “transportation”, “built environment”, or “information and communications” – however, the listed activities undertaken or contemplated also manage expectations of “employment” and “service delivery”. As a result, these items have been included in this inaugural Plan to demonstrate the Town’s broad commitment to accessibility. It is anticipated that additional initiatives and actions will be identified for the other six standards as the Plan evolves and matures over time.

For clarity, the priority area of “employment” includes all aspects of employment within the Town, including, but not limited to, municipal staff, volunteers, and third-party contractors. Employment considers all of employment and volunteerism including recruitment, retention, training and development, and physical work environments. The priority area of “service delivery” encompasses the goods and services provided by a 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 initiatives and actions are further considered under the areas of:

1. Staff and/or Council Training
2. Technological
3. Physical Space
4. Policy, Procedure and Plans

## What We Have Done (Past)

The Town of View Royal strives to create an inclusive and welcoming environment. The Town has already taken several actions to identify and remove/prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the municipality both from an employment and municipal services perspective. Some of these achievements to date include:

### Focus 1: Employment

#### 1. Staff and/or Council Training

- Completed Accessible Spaces 101 University of Athabasca course (in partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation) – two members of staff.

#### 2. Technological

- Offered virtual interviews during recruitment process.
- Provided ‘mobile’ workstation solutions to staff through the use of tablet devices with a data package.

#### 3. Physical Space

- Provided sit-stand desks or monitor lifts where possible.

#### 4. Policy, Procedure and Plans

- Conducted ergonomic workstation assessments.
- Provided work-from-home accommodations and modified work hours.
- Flexible return to work program to support existing employees recovering from injury or illness.

### Focus 2: Service Delivery

#### 1. Staff and/or Council Training

- Participated in Canadian National Institute for the Blind’s (CNIB) multi-day training, including walking/bus tour and workshop, with multiple agencies – two members of staff.
- Acquired RHFAC Professional certification from the Rick Hansen Foundation – one member of staff.

## Focus 2: Service Delivery - Continued

### 2. Technological

- Established the [accessibility@viewroyal.ca](mailto:accessibility@viewroyal.ca) email address as the Town's
- dedicated public feedback tool on accessibility.
- Created an accessibility page on the Town's website to share information about accessibility and the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Created online fillable forms such as business licence, building permit, grant in aid applications.
- Implemented remote payment options for property taxes, sewer utility
- invoices, and business licences.
- Implemented livestreaming and meeting video archiving online of Council and Committee meetings.
- Implemented electronic participation in Council and Committee meetings.
- Implemented mail ballot voting as an additional voting opportunity.
- Provided online Budget Variance Dashboard and Financial Plan Insights dashboard with accessible colour schemes on the Town's website.

### 3. Physical Space

- Designed and constructed the Public Safety Building to incorporate accessible features for all public areas of the building.
- Renovated Council Chambers with the installation of an improved microphone and sound system, including heading aid loop, and provided for future wheeled mobility devices to access the Council dais.
- Installed new railings and concrete steps at various parks and trails; new railings were also fitted with an additional lower rail to accommodate people of varying heights.
- Installed accessible parking stalls (one each) at Helmcken Centennial Park and View Royal Park.
- Improved the Town's bus stops to BC Transit Specifications to better facilitate users of wheeled mobility devices.
- Installed audible pedestrian/bicycle signal crossing at Burnside Road West/Watkiss Way intersection that stops all traffic while pedestrians and cyclists cross.
- Installed audible pedestrian signals at Island Highway/Admirals Road and Island Highway/Helmcken Road intersections.

## Focus 2: Service Delivery - Continued

<b>3. Physical Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Installed portable toilets in Helmcken Centennial Park, Portage Park, and</li><li>• View Royal Park sized to accommodate wheeled mobility devices.</li><li>• Installed concrete access/entrance ramps into playground areas at</li><li>• Helmcken Centennial Park, Marler Park, and Knollwood Park.</li><li>• Modified fire gate separating Glentana Road from Island Highway to allow for the passage of wheeled mobility devices.<sup>3</sup></li><li>• Installed tactile warning pads at the Six Mile Road/Atkins Road roundabout.</li></ul>
<b>4. Policy, Procedure and Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joined the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee. Implemented a confined space entry policy.</li><li>• Implemented a confined space entry program to retrofit existing pump stations to reduce number of confined space entry locations.</li><li>• Lowered speed limits in various locations throughout the Town. Established Sidewalk Inspection and Maintenance Policy #5200-019. Established sidewalk clearing requirements by property owners in</li><li>• Streets Bylaw No. 980, 2019.</li><li>• Developed the Active Transportation Network Plan, an all ages and abilities plan.</li></ul>

## What We're Doing (Present)

While there is evidence of the Town's past initiatives and actions, there is also much happening at present on the accessibility journey. The Town is currently working on the following:

<b>Focus 1: Employment</b>	
<b>1. Staff and/or Council Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seeking accessibility awareness training provider for managers/supervisors.</li></ul>
<b>2. Technological</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing work from home options as necessary through the use of Teams.</li></ul>

## What We're Doing (Present)

### Focus 1: Employment

#### 3. Physical Space

- Replacing workstations at Town Hall to improve ergonomics and broaden workstation usability for a diverse workforce.

#### 4. Policy, Procedure and Plans

- Discussing meeting accommodation requirements when coordinating interviews.
- Discussing potential work accommodation requirements during interviews.

### Focus 2: Service Delivery

#### 1. Staff and/or Council Training

- Seeking accessibility awareness training provider for staff and Council.
- Developing a visual identity guide that incorporates information to aid staff in the production of documents/materials for people with visual impairment.

#### 2. Technological

- Updating the IT Strategic Plan to include process automation initiatives, such as the development of online applications.

#### 3. Physical Space

- Redesigning Chancellor Park Playground as an accessible/low barrier playground: The Town's Development Services Department led public engagement on the project, which involved an online survey, public open house, and an on-site pop-up event. Feedback received from these engagement activities was shared in a "What We Heard Report" to Council on June 18, 2024. There was strong support for a universally accessible playground at Chancellor Park. A grant application was submitted in the summer of 2024 to Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) "Enabling Accessibility Fund Small Projects Component". If successful, the additional funding will allow for additional improvements at Chancellor Park for an enhanced user experience.
- Engaging with the operator of Welland Legacy Park for the installation of accessible parking.
- Installing audible crosswalk signals and leading pedestrian interval crossing signals, allowing a pedestrian to enter the area prior to a turning motorist, as a traffic signal controller improvement at Island Highway/View Royal Avenue intersection.
- Lowering speed limits on residential streets to improve the safety of active travellers.

## Focus 2: Service Delivery

### 4. Policy, Procedure and Plans

Developing the Town’s draft Official Community Plan (OCP) engagement strategy: The engagement strategy – undertaken to help inform the OCP review process – will utilize a variety of engagement tools to ensure access to events and initiatives so that there is broad participation and input into the OCP. Specifically, OCP in-person engagement events will consider location (accessible washrooms, entrance, parking, etc.); materials (easy to see/understandable); room layout (ease of manoeuvrability for all); and space for “pull aside” (so people who are hearing-impaired can more readily talk to a member of the project team). Related to this initiative, staff have identified a CNIB contact for OCP engagement through participation in CNIB-led outreach in spring 2024.

## What We May Explore (Future)

The Town is aware that the sections above do not encapsulate all the needs and the feedback received through the Committee’s consultation process. To address these gaps, accessibility needs will continue to inform the Town’s initiatives and actions. Accordingly, the Town of View Royal may consider implementing the following:

### Focus 1: Employment

#### 1. Staff and/or Council Training

- Collaborate with other municipalities on training and resource development opportunities.

#### 2. Techno-logical

- Develop processes and guides to ensure that staff web content providers are aware of accessibility standards and best practices.

#### 3. Physical Space

- Create permanent accessible egress by constructing an exterior ramp from Town Hall Council Chambers’ dais to ground level, ensuring the safety of elected officials in the future who may be users of wheeled mobility devices.
- Prepare a staffroom plan to facilitate future accessibility upgrades, including, but not limited to door automation, and changes to plumbing, cupboard/counter, seating, lighting, and appliance configuration.

## Focus 1: Employment- Continued

### 4. Policy, Procedure and Plans

- Review job descriptions and advertisements as they arise with a view to considering accessibility and inclusivity terminology in job descriptions and requirements for positions.
- Consider a review of interview technology use and interviewer training.
- Investigate hybrid work schedule.

## Focus 2: Service Delivery

### 1. Staff and/or Council Training

- Provide additional training opportunities for staff and/or Council around accessibility-related topics.
- Provide funding for staff to complete the Rick Hansen Foundation Inclusion and Accessibility Training course or the RHFAC Fundamentals Training course or any other pertinent individual training opportunities.
- Deliver accessible document creation training for staff.
- Deliver accessible electronic form creation training for staff. Deliver alternate text creation and usage training for staff.

### 2. Techno-logical

- Undertake a Town website refresh project that includes accessibility features as a primary focus.
- Improve remote meeting options at the Public Safety Building.
- Increase online engagement and efficiencies with interactive dashboards and automated communications.
- Convert records from paper to digital where practical.

### 3. Physical Space

- Upgrade the Town Hall foyer/front entrance to improve safety and improve user experience by replacing the power door assist system and activation switches, improving visibility, installing a cane-detectable feature for the door projection, and potentially reducing the threshold height.
- Design and provide an accessible desk/podium for the public to use while addressing elected officials in Council Chambers.
- Utilize the future Transportation Master Plan to inform on the use of tactile warning strips and other mobility, tactile, audible, and visual aids for future road/sidewalk projects where appropriate (in accordance with BC Active Transportation Guidelines).
- Provide active transportation infrastructure in accordance with the Town's Active Transportation Network Plan (completed in 2023) and Transportation Master Plan (anticipated in 2025).

## Focus 2: Service Delivery - Continued

### 3. Physical Space

- Consider installing audible crosswalk signals and leading pedestrian interval crossing signals, allowing a pedestrian to enter the area prior to a turning motorist, for future intersections where possible.

### 4. Policy, Procedure and Plans

- Consider an accessibility lens when drafting the following:
- Community Engagement Strategy – 2024-2025
- Official Community Plan Review – 2024-2026
- Transportation Master Plan – 2025-2026
- Parks and Trails Master Plan – 2026
- Helmcken-Centennial Parks Master Plan – 2026
- Placemaking Urban Design Plan – 2026-2027
- Housing Strategy – 2027

## Conclusion

The Town's Accessibility Plan strives to honour the rights, dignity, and independence of people with disabilities in the community and to encourage a municipal culture of value, respect, and support. The Plan solidifies View Royal's commitment to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the Town. The Plan documents initiatives and actions to encourage transparency, accountability, feedback, and dialogue that help the Plan evolve to reflect the needs and experiences of the community.

Identified initiatives and actions will be completed in the same manner as all other municipal initiatives and actions – that is, as resources permit and in accordance with annual budget planning cycles. The Plan and projects will be reviewed, revised, monitored, and reported on as new information emerges.

While initiatives and actions are implemented, the underlying training and awareness building embedded in the Plan is invaluable. As staff expand their understanding over this initial three-year term, the organization will learn to incorporate accessibility into regular operations in an informed and effective way. Early success in this inaugural Plan will build momentum for the next Plan in 2027.

This focussed approach will help the Town to move towards our long-term accessibility goal: **View Royal is striving towards becoming a barrier-free community.**

## Contact Us

The Town of View Royal welcomes feedback on accessibility in the following ways:

**Email:** [accessibility@viewroyal.ca](mailto:accessibility@viewroyal.ca)

**Phone:** 250-479-6800

**Mail/Delivery:** View Royal Ave., Victoria, BC, V9B 1A6

# MONITOR 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 AND 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 benefits 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

## **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  
250-474-1773

## **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  
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