



## REPORT

Report Date: July 8, 2022  
Contact: Wilma Clarke  
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Meeting Date: July 19, 2022  
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services  
SUBJECT: Accessibility Strategy – Phase 1

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council approve Phase 1 of *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy* as set out in Appendix A, including goals and objectives, definitions, principles, approaches, focus areas and accountability framework.
- B. THAT Council acknowledge a culture of ableism present in institutions and communities, including the City of Vancouver, and the increased need for education and awareness around accessibility for staff in all City departments, as a foundational approach required to embed change and shift this culture.
- C. THAT Council approve the scope of work for Phase 2 of the Accessibility Strategy focused on:
  - i. developing a multi-year action plan;
  - ii. facilitating a broad community engagement and prioritization process;
  - iii. establishing an Accessibility Committee and an ongoing monitoring and evaluation structure, including a public feedback process, as required by the *Accessible British Columbia Act*; and
  - iv. developing a financial and delivery strategy for the phase that considers funding/delivery options and trade-offs that can be reviewed as part of the next budget process.
- D. THAT Council approve in principle the departmental actions in development identified in the summary table in Strategy Appendix 6 and direct staff to identify required resources for any actions not currently resourced, for consideration in future City budget processes.

- E. THAT Council direct staff to report back in 2024 on the status of Phase 2 deliverables, including an update on consultation with the provincial government on the establishment of the accessibility standards within the *Accessible British Columbia Act*.
- F. THAT Council authorize the Director of Legal Services to prepare and bring forward for enactment amendments to the Parking By-law No. 6059 generally as presented in Appendix C & D to advance City standards for accessible parking in new developments.
- G. THAT Council refer the Accessibility Strategy to Vancouver Public Library Board, the Vancouver Police Board, and the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and encourage these boards to adopt policy aligned with the Strategy.
- H. That Council endorse the continuation of the Accessibility Strategy Task Force to advise staff on the further development and implementation of this strategy until the legislatively mandated Accessibility Committee is established.

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report seeks Council's approval of Phase 1 of *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy*. This phase includes policy directions identified through the goals and objectives, definitions, principles, approaches, focus areas and accountability framework.

For the purposes of this strategy, the term "persons with disabilities" refers to people who experience physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related impairments, inclusive of seniors with disabilities and people with lived experience of mental health challenges or substance use. About one in five Vancouverites has a lifelong disability, but almost everyone will live with at least a short-term disability at some point in their lives, such as a physical injury that will heal over time.

The proposed *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change* outlines key areas of focus to action the City's commitment to support the full participation of persons with disabilities, including establishing and maintaining inclusive services, programs and infrastructure, and identifying, removing and preventing barriers.

Successful implementation of the Strategy will require appropriate levels of funding across the organization, resources and training to act on the commitments, principles and actions set out in *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change*. The recommended Phase 2 scope of work includes developing a scope of work and resourcing approach for a multi-year action plan that will include broad community engagement and action prioritization, establishing an Accessibility Committee and an ongoing monitoring and evaluation structure, including a public feedback process. These steps will also fulfill existing legal obligations in the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, and will allow the City to work with the Province to consider and meet upcoming accessibility requirements and actions, such as changes to the BC Building Code.

The strategy also aligns with the City's Equity Framework and City of Reconciliation framework by challenging colonial orientations ingrained in City policies and operations. As with equity work

generally, the strategy recognizes that when the City prioritizes those who experience the most need, everyone benefits.

### **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- On [September 18, 2018](#), Council directed staff to work with an Accessibility Task Force to develop of Phase 1 of an Accessibility Strategy.
- On [November 3, 2021](#), Council received an interim report on the development of the Accessibility Strategy, and approved resourcing and implementing early actions to respond to key accessibility priorities identified through the stakeholder engagement. Council also endorsed five accessibility commitments.
- [Transportation 2040](#), 2012
- [Enhanced Accessibility Guidelines](#), 2013
- [Framework for City of Reconciliation](#), 2014
- [Healthy City Strategy](#), 2014
- [Housing Vancouver Strategy](#), 2017
- Council motion: [Accelerating the City of Vancouver Pedestrian Curb Ramp Program](#), 2018
- [Single Use Reduction Strategy](#), 2018
- Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture, Vancouver Culture Plan 2020-2029, 2019
- Council motion: [Access to Water and Washrooms as a Human Right](#), 2020
- [Equity Framework](#), 2021
- Council motion: [Advancing Efforts for an Age Friendly City](#), 2022

### **CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

### **REPORT**

#### ***Background/Context***

##### Context

More than one in five Vancouver residents live with a lifelong disability, representing at least 107,000 people in the city.<sup>1</sup> As the city's population ages, the number of persons with disabilities will continue to increase: there are an estimated 113,000 people age 65 and older in the city, and this population has grown at nearly five times the rate of the overall population in the past five years.<sup>2</sup> Nearly 20% of adults in the city rate their own mental health as fair or poor,<sup>3</sup> and this number increased to 35% during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, accessed through Community Data Program.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, 2016 and 2021 Annual Population Estimates by Age and Sex, accessed through Community Data Program.

<sup>3</sup> Vancouver Coastal Health/Fraser Health, 2013/2014 My Health My Community Survey.

<sup>4</sup> BC Centre for Disease Control, COVID SPEAK Survey, spring 2021.

Even though a large percentage of Vancouver's population experiences disabilities, ableism remains present and is expressed through City infrastructure, services, processes and information. If approved by Council, *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy* will serve as a guide to raise the collective consciousness on how persons with disabilities experience the City, and how to identify, address and prevent barriers to their full participation, focusing on areas for which the City has jurisdiction.

*Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy* emerges from the Healthy City Strategy, Vancouver's social sustainability framework, which focuses on creating equitable well-being outcomes for all. The strategy also aligns with the City's Equity Framework and City of Reconciliation framework by challenging colonial orientations ingrained in City policies and operations. As with equity work generally, the strategy recognizes that when the City prioritizes those who experience the most need, everyone benefits. The work proposed in the strategy focuses on evolving the culture of the City through addressing systemic barriers, committing to education, improving and expanding service delivery, and creating an inclusive City and work environment for people with disabilities.

Further, both the federal and provincial governments recently passed accessibility laws: the *Accessible Canada Act* was passed in June 2019 and the *Accessible BC Act* was passed in June 2021. With the adoption of the *Accessible BC Act*, the Government of British Columbia has developed new accessibility and inclusion legislation that works to identify, remove and prevent barriers that impede the full participation of people with disabilities in their communities. This legislation guides the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards and draws on the expertise and experience of people with disabilities. Accessibility standards will include a variety of areas such as service delivery, education, employment, housing, the built environment, information and communication, and transportation, and will rely on a mix of incentives, compliance and enforcement tools.

As of 2022, all public sector organizations are required to establish an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan and to create public feedback mechanisms. Phase 1 of *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy*, will help to meet these initial requirements as set out by provincial legislation.

### Phased Approach for Developing and Implementing the Strategy

The City of Vancouver has taken many steps toward becoming a more accessible city in recent years. In 2018, working with members of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC), the Seniors' Advisory Committee (SAC), and the former People with Lived Experience Advisory (PWLE), staff looked at current accessibility gaps within the City structure. These included a lack of an overarching vision and guiding statements around accessibility, lack of consistent understanding of the complexity of disability, little coordination or oversight between departmental accessibility efforts, little clear accountability, reporting monitoring or data collection, and lack of consistency between bylaws, policies and practices across the City.

Following Council direction in 2018 to develop Phase 1 of an Accessibility Strategy, staff have worked with the Accessibility Task Force to develop a proposed accessibility strategy and to coordinate a phased development and implementation approach. As directed by Council, the Task Force includes representatives of both PDAC and SAC. This report accounts for the work completed in Phase 1, including a targeted community engagement process. The engagement process focused on various stakeholder groups comprised of people with disabilities, family members, caregivers, and people from intersecting equity-denied communities. A full report of

the community engagement process is detailed in the *What We Heard* report (Strategy Appendix 2).

Internally, a cross-departmental staff working group was established to clarify City departments' responsibility to address accessibility within the organization. Staff have shared promising practices and reflections on what is needed to move forward collectively to address accessibility challenges in the City. Staff have also documented current city-led actions and practices in relation to their respective policy frameworks and City functions. Submitting current departmental actions and in development.

Phase 2 will include broader public engagement and the creation of a multi-year action plan. Staff will identify and scope long- and short-term policies and actions the City can take to better meet community priorities. This action plan will reflect upcoming changes to provincial accessibility requirements, including updates to the BC Building Code and other actions resulting from the implementation of *Accessible BC Act Legislation*.

### ***Strategic Analysis***

Persons with disabilities share a common experience of physical and attitudinal barriers in an ableist society. However they are diverse in their disabilities, gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, immigration, among others. These intersecting identities have implications for how these individuals will fare in society. The City needs nuanced and inclusive approaches to City building, and must work to avoid simplistic solutions that may further marginalize people. This requires a social understanding of disability, considering a wide range of accessibility interventions which respond to experiences such as neurodivergence, or disabilities within the context of racism and poverty, for example.

The City of Vancouver has the responsibility to uphold and protect the human rights of people living with disabilities. Government institutions have been implicated in institutional and systemic discrimination. The City like all levels of government and public bodies has an opportunity to create the conditions needed to promote and ensure accessible environments and engaging in cultural transformation through education and awareness to challenge ableist attitudes and practices.

### **Accessibility Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges in the City**

Research and community engagement have identified significant accessibility gaps in the City. These gaps impact people across diverse identities and lived experience, and include:

*Attitudinal Barriers:* Rooted in ableism, these barriers form when expectations, stigma and stereotypes about people with disabilities impede their full participation in the society. There is a need to increase understanding of the full spectrum of disability and to shift from a medical to a social understanding of disabilities. People may have impairments that impact the functioning of their minds, bodies and senses, but they are disabled by society through the effects of ableist attitudes and systems.

*Organizational Systemic Barriers:* Engagement with the Accessibility Task Force and Advisory Committees identified that the City has created barriers by not having a collective vision, overarching strategy and cohesive policy or procedures in place to address accessibility challenges. In order to address this gap, the City needs to apply an

accessibility lens as a tool for identifying and clarifying issues affecting persons with disabilities and assessing and addressing the impact of programs, services or decisions.

*Communications and Access to Information:* There are significant barriers affecting people's ability to receive and send information about the City processes, especially for people with multiple disabilities or intersecting experiences of oppression. Communication materials need to account for physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, and /or age-related impairments and exist in multiple formats that consider the multidimensional aspects of disabilities.

*Physical and Structural Barriers:* The physical environment has many structures and conditions that prevent people from navigating a setting or spaces. Sidewalks, curb cuts, bike lane transitions, pathways, lighting, signage, accessible wayfinding, seating and washrooms continue to be key infrastructure priorities. Systems and structures are created for able-bodied people which then require people that "don't fit the mold" to ask for accommodations. Adopting the principles of universal design in the design of products and environments means they will be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

To minimize the physical and structural barriers, one example that the City of Vancouver is putting forth as an early actions is stated below:

#### *Advancing City Standards for Accessible Parking in New Developments*

Recommendation F seeks to amend the Parking By-law to introduce requirements for van accessible parking in new developments and update how accessible parking spaces are designed and allocated, to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities. To better accommodate vehicles with lifts and ramps as well as accessible space users who need more space to be able to access both sides of their vehicle, the first and every 10<sup>th</sup> accessible parking space shall be van accessible. Van accessible parking spaces will be 1m wider than current accessible parking spaces, for a total width of 5.0m. In addition, the maximum cross-slope at accessible parking areas will be reduced to 2%, which helps minimize the chances of wheeled devices rolling away from their users when getting in/out of their vehicle. Finally, in strata developments, accessible parking spaces shall be held in common property and not assigned to any strata lot so they may be more available to the residents that need them. (see Appendix C & D)

#### Emerging approaches

Four emerging approaches were identified within the community engagement process for moving forward with the Accessibility Strategy given the current legislative context, the calls for racial equity and the renewed commitment to accessibility within the City structure:

1. **Education and awareness**, fundamental steps to collectively address ableism, reduce stigma and understand the complex realities of people disabilities;
2. **A racial justice lens**, recognizing that ableism and racism are intertwined, that inequities and injustices are rooted in settler ideals of whiteness, and that addressing discrimination and racism is part of the solution to accessibility challenges;

3. **Intersectionality**, recognizing the multifaceted nature of identities and intersecting forms of discrimination; and
4. **A social inclusion approach**, promoting interaction and meaningful engagement that reduces social isolation for people with disabilities, creating opportunities to freely move, participate, lead, and contribute to the community.

### Overview of the Accessibility Strategy - Phase 1

The proposed *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy* outlines the following principles to guide the City's efforts to meet the approved Accessibility Commitments:

- **Inclusion:** All people must be able to participate fully in their community with dignity and individual autonomy.
- **Adaptability:** We acknowledge that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology and attitudes change and we will maintain flexibility (adaptability) to adapt to the changes.
- **Diversity:** All people are respected for their differences and lived experiences, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs and immigration status.
- **Collaboration and Engagement:** Accessibility is a shared responsibility. It requires the City to collaborate with people with lived experience, other stakeholders, levels of governments, agency partners, advocacy organizations, and service providers to eliminate barriers and support innovations towards an accessible society.
- **Intersectionality:** Our strategy acknowledges that other aspects of identity intersect with ability to determine how individuals experience barriers and inclusion.
- **Respect:** All people are treated with respect and dignity, recognizing their self-determination and ability to make meaningful contributions to society and thrive in the community.
- **Leadership and Accountability:** The City strives to lead by example in accessibility excellence by working towards maximum accessibility over minimum compliance. Senior leadership in all areas and at all levels of the organization are accountable for advancing accessibility in their areas of responsibility.

As overarching goals of the proposed strategy are:

- Build inclusive communities and provide accessible environments in which all individuals have equitable access to the City's services, programs and infrastructure.
- Build an inclusive and accessible work environment and culture, in which all departments will be supported and encouraged to embed an accessibility and inclusion lens into daily operations.

- Ensure that the City's hiring practices are inclusive and that barriers to the recruitment, retention, accommodation and advancement of employees with disabilities are removed, and where possible.

The objectives of the proposed strategy are:

- To respect the rights, dignity and independence of people with disabilities;
- To create an environment where all people feel valued, respected, and openly welcomed;
- To ensure equitable access and opportunity to participate in the planning, and designing of municipal policies programs, and service delivery;
- To foster a culture of equity and inclusion for all residents, visitors and employees, including persons with disabilities, seniors, and other inequitably treated groups;
- To demonstrate City leadership by embedding an accessibility lens in all daily operating practices of every department;
- To value and incorporate the knowledge and perspectives of persons with disabilities within City's policies, programs, and services;
- To recognize that individuals have complex identities that influences their perspectives and experiences, and that barriers to inclusion may be a result of different layers of identities that intersect with one another;
- To ensure that the City's policies, regulations, and systems reflect the Accessibility Strategy; and
- To align the City's Strategy with both the Federal and Provincial accessibility legislation.

### Focus areas

*Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change* does not intend to direct or duplicate existing interdepartmental work. Instead, through eight distinct focus areas, it outlines community priorities, elevates existing departmental accessibility practices, and aligns work across City departments to address critical gaps. Seven of the eight focus areas align with the scope of the *Accessible British Columbia Act*; the eighth, focused on advocacy with other orders of government, responds to community input that the City is only one piece of the overall structure to ensure accessibility for all. The City, as a municipal government, needs to work collaboratively with other orders of government and affiliated partners, including City Boards, as well as the education, healthcare and social systems to advance accessibility goals in the community.

The focus areas include outcome statements, proposed action areas generated from stakeholder engagement, and community priorities to be considered in Phase 2. A list of current City-led actions is included in Strategy Appendix 6. The following is a high level overview of the focus areas:

#### ***Focus Area 1: Built Environment and Public Spaces***

Goal: The City will align the built environment with Universal Design principles<sup>5</sup> and seek to ensure City projects and public spaces incorporate the highest level of accessibility standards so that everyone can access all physical infrastructure in the city.

#### ***Focus Area 2: Transportation Services, Policies and Programs***

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<sup>5</sup> Mace, Robert, The Centre for Universal Design; (1988); Universal design is described as the concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life. [https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about\\_us/usronmace.htm](https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_us/usronmace.htm)



Goal: Apply universal design principles to guide transportation planning and design, to connect people to their daily needs regardless of their abilities

***Focus Area 3: Housing Policies, Programs and Design***

Goal: The City of Vancouver continues to work to create accessible, affordable, market and non-market housing for persons with disabilities.

***Focus Area 4: Information and Communication***

Goal: The City of Vancouver provides accessible information to connect and engage with persons with disabilities by providing communication supports, accessible websites, formats and digital content.

***Focus Area 5: Employment***

Goal: The City of Vancouver increases opportunities for persons with disabilities to contribute to the workforce and commits to supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace for all.

***Focus Area 6: Governance and Engagement***

Goal: Reduce barriers to participation in civic life using an equity-focused approach and provide equitable access to municipal programs and services

***Focus Area 7: Capacity and Collaboration***

Goal: Together with Non-Profit organizations and persons with disabilities, build capacity and awareness to increase collaboration in the sector and address accessibility challenges in the community.

***Focus Area 8: Advocacy and working with other Orders of Government along with other Agencies***

Goal: Work in integrated and collaborative ways with all other orders of government so that persons with disabilities are able move, lead, participate, and contribute in their communities.

Structure for implementation

Pending Council approval of report back of required resources for Phase 2, the coordination and implementation of the Accessibility Strategy, including the next phase of broad community engagement, the development of the multi-year action plan, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the proposed accountability framework (outlined in the next section) will be led by City staff and supported by an Accessibility Committee, and City departmental leads. See Strategy Appendix 7 for resource requirements for implementation. Staff recommend the following structure:

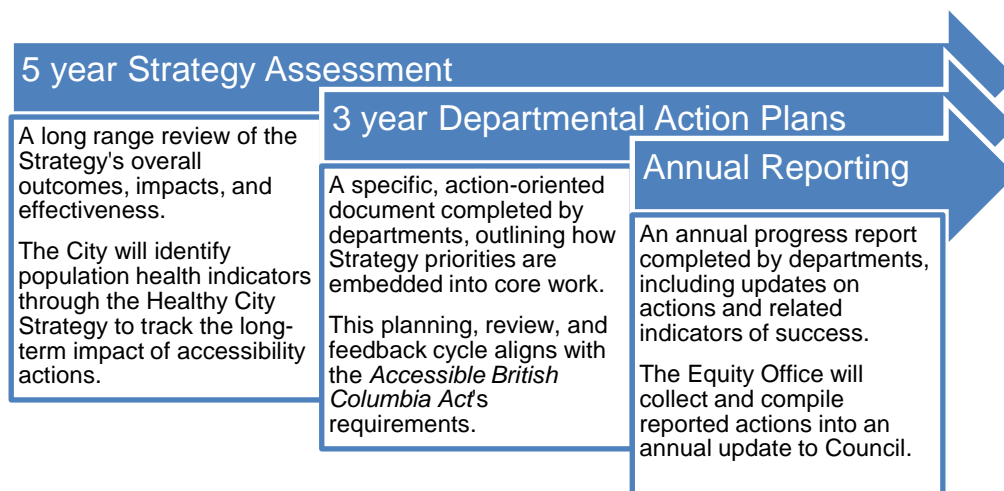
- *Accessibility Committee*: As part of the obligations under Section 9 of the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, the City of Vancouver is required to establish an Accessibility Committee to: a) assist in identifying barriers to individuals in or interacting with the City, and b) advise how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the City. Among other diversity requirements, at least half of the members of the Committee must be persons with disabilities or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities. Staff recommend that the Accessibility Committee comprise a mix of City staff and community members with lived experience to allow for public accountability, and direct communication and feedback. The composition of this

proposed committee may include some current Task Force and/or PDAC members. This is still to be determined. It is expected that the Accessibility Committee will review annual progress reports and departmental action plans, provide comments on actions taken, identify progress gaps, and prioritize ongoing work. The Committee's Terms of References will be co-created by all members of the group and will be presented to Council as part of Phase 2 deliverables.

- *Staff Lead (ACCS):* A dedicated Planner will work with the Accessibility Committee and Departmental Leads to develop and implement ongoing community engagement and prioritization process and develop and track a multi-year action plan. ACCS will also partner with the Equity Office to develop and implement public feedback mechanisms to measure the impact of the accessibility strategy and related actions.
- *Departmental Leads:* Each department will designate staff to lead and coordinate relevant priority actions in the Accessibility Strategy. These staff representatives will liaise closely with the staff lead and the Equity Office and be responsible for completing departmental action plans, as well as tracking, monitoring, and reporting on actions through an annual progress report.

Accountability framework

In order to monitor, evaluate and communicate progress in the focus areas identified in the Accessibility Strategy and the related actions set by City departments, the accountability framework outlines a plan for assessing how the City is advancing accessibility goals. A collaborative structure for monitoring and evaluating provides transparency, secures the integrity of the Strategy and supports an outcome that the City is a progressive, inclusive and compassionate place to live, work and recreate.



Progress on the accessibility actions will be monitored annually, with progress reports on prioritized short and long term actions published each year. A prioritization exercise with key stakeholders will also be conducted annually with the Accessibility Committee to evaluate progress on the eight focus areas and identify future actions for implementation. Ongoing collective assessment through a Community of Practice will also provide an opportunity for learning and reflection about how City actions are having an impact at the community level. A public feedback mechanism, coordinated with the Accessibility Committee, will focus on

outcomes for people with disabilities as part of the ongoing tracking and monitoring mechanisms within the Healthy City Strategy research scope.

In alignment with the *Accessible British Columbia Act* requirement, Departmental Leads will be required to complete an action planning document every 3 years. This document is specific and action-oriented, and will ask Departments to outline how Strategy priorities are embedded into their core work and objectives.

### Phase 2 scope of work

If Council approves the recommendations in this report, departmental staff will scope resourcing needs and put forward resource requests for consideration in subsequent budget forecasting.

Phase 2 of the Accessibility Strategy will focus on:

- Setting up the internal structure for coordination and implementation of the Strategy;
- Setting up the model, mandate and structure of the Accessibility Committee;
- Establishing the internal and external accountability and monitoring processes;
- Facilitating a community engagement process aimed at engaging communities beyond those involved in Phase 1, prioritizing actions;
- Developing the first multi-year action plan 2023-2026, considering new and upcoming legislative requirements from the Provincial and Federal governments; and
- Working alongside community organizations to implement community based projects that support the goals of the strategy.

### ***Public/Civic Agency Input***

As part of the strategy development process, staff convened an Accessibility Task Force with membership from the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and the Seniors' Advisory Committee (SAC). Task Force members provided guidance to staff since the inception of this work and acted as liaisons to their respective advisory committees. PDAC and SAC have provided full endorsement of the strategy through advisory committee motions included in APPENDIX B.

To ensure continuation of the work proposed in the strategy until the Accessibility Committee is established in Phase 2, staff recommend the current Accessibility Task Force members be invited to continue to meet. In the interim, the Task Force would focus on providing guidance on the structure of the accessibility committee, the transition to the implementation phase and advising the direction for future engagement. This will ensure that the momentum of the *Transforming Attitudes Embedding Change* carries forward within the City and with community stakeholders.

### ***ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY TASK FORCE COMMENTS (included verbatim from the members)***

These comments are made in the spirit of “Nothing about us without us”, the driving principle behind the development of the Accessibility Strategy.

First a disclaimer: the Task Force had very little time to review the Draft Strategy, and this led to a marathon of meetings in the space of a few days to consider a very complex

document. As we write these Comments we have not seen the Draft Strategy being considered by Council; we hope that our comments are still relevant.

Work on proposing a Strategy goes back more than a decade, and Council's approval in September 2018 gave a clear indication that this was indeed going to happen. It has now been almost 4 years and expectations are high, and rightly so. Public consultations have given the message that this work was moving forward, and the credibility of the process and message require that Phase 2 start as soon as possible. This has been 10 years in the making, and we are so close to a successful completion. We need one last push from Council to make it all happen!

The members of the Task Force have aimed to develop a Strategy that is visionary and aspirational. It has always been our intention to create a Strategy that reflects the best end-state possible, fully aware that the work is never done, and supporting the City's vision to become a model of accessibility. We need to shoot for the stars, and aim in that direction. The Strategy should set clear goals that reflect this vision, not merely general statements of intent that give rise to implementations plans reflecting varying interpretations of expectations.

The Task Force also aimed to develop a strategy with a broad scope, based on a corporate culture of inclusion and accessibility. This culture must develop over time, and the efforts of individual units must become the mindset of all. We commend the work of the units already working on aspects of accessibility, and we sincerely hope that this will become ingrained in the culture of the entire organization. The former City Manager advised Council when it was considering the Strategy in September 2018 that this Strategy would affect the entire organization. Accessibility and inclusion should not be limited to special projects or time-limited initiatives, they must become the new way to do business.

The combined lived experience of the Task Force members who have worked on this Draft Strategy is over a century. During their time on the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and the Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC) our members have dealt countless times with City staff in relation to a multitude of initiatives related to accessibility. This is reflected in the list of ongoing issues provided by the Task Force in relation to Housing and Transportation, for instance. Based on our combined experience the Task Force recommends that the accountability principles set out in the Draft Strategy should be strengthened, because the City currently does not have a corporate culture of accessibility and inclusion. Responsibility for accessibility must not be seen as belonging with the Equity Office or the potential Accessibility Committee. These two bodies can monitor and report on the adequacy of efforts of city staff, but City staff must be responsible and accountable for their own work in this regard. Council may want to consider the accountability principle set out in the Accessibility Strategy for the City of Calgary: work on implementing the Strategy is part of the annual performance assessment process for all heads of units.

In relation to Phase 2, the Task Force obviously hopes that Council will provide the necessary direction and resources to proceed immediately because there are clear expectations within the disability community that this work should move right along. This is not a partisan issue but an administrative process, and work should not be held up during the forthcoming electoral period. After Council approved the development of the Strategy in September 2018, PDAC and SAC members appointed to the Task Force

gathered relevant information with City Staff Robin Newton but were frustrated because a dedicated lead staff had not been assigned to the Task Force. There is no reason for delay this time.

This being a new strategy the Task Force is comforted that the review period will be 3-5 years rather than a lengthier period. No doubt adjustments will be required and these should not be delayed for too long.

The Task Force has concerns regarding the respective roles and accountabilities of PDAC, the Equity Office, the Task Force, the soon to be created Accessibility Committee, and City units. What accountability framework will be created? An effective accountability framework is essential to the proper implementation of the Accessibility Strategy. Council will need to consider the mandate of the Accessibility Committee carefully in relation to the implementation of the City Strategy. This does not delay the development of the Strategy proper but will be relevant in the creation of an effective accountability framework.

In conclusion, the Task Force wish to recognize the tireless efforts of City Staff who have worked with the Task Force to develop this Strategy. In this regard we want to single out Karen Lai for her solid support and Wilma Clarke for always clarifying the City's positions on various issues. There is no doubt that they embody the corporate culture that should permeate the entire administration." (April 28, 2022)

Staff note: In response to feedback provided by the Task Force that the review time for the draft strategy was too assertive and did not provide sufficient time for review or comment by aligned Committees, staff moved the scheduled Council date from March 2022 to May 2022 to enable more time for review. The reschedule of the Council report from May to July to enable further internal review by staff also enabled additional time for Task Force and Advisory Committee feedback.

### ***Implications/Related Issues/Risk***

#### ***Financial***

Current work of responding to the specific motion is funded from a one-time allocation in the 2020 operating budget of \$200,000. An additional \$200,000 was approved in the November 2021 interim update: the 2022 Operating budget included the following support \$ 60,000 one-time to support an on-line directory for persons with disabilities and \$30,000 one-time for the development of a resource to support training and education; \$90,000 ongoing to support ASL & Closed Captioning for Council and Senior Leaders, along with \$20,000 ongoing training and education. Funding to extend the contract of the assigned Planner to continue to support the work described in this report, has been reallocated from within the 2022 ACCS operating budget.

Further resources will be required to implement Phase II and the Accountability Framework, the latter including support for public engagement, Accessibility Committee, and the reporting outlined as a requirement under the Act. As part of the Phase 2 plan, staff will develop a financial and delivery strategy for the phase that considers funding/delivery options that can be reviewed as part of the 2023 budget process.

**Legal**

The recommendations in this report will ensure compliance with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. Municipalities are designated as a “prescribed organization” under Part 3 of the *Act*.

**CONCLUSION**

*Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver’s Accessibility Strategy* is an initial step towards realizing the City’s commitment to supporting the full participation of persons with disabilities, by establishing and maintaining inclusive services, programs and infrastructure, and by identifying, removing and preventing barriers. The successful implementation of the Strategy will require a deep and shared understanding of the complex and intersectional diversity of disabilities, and the necessary funding, resources and training to create cultural and attitudinal shifts to address ableism. The process to date has positioned the City to fulfill the obligations of the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, address the priorities set by the community and align existing departmental accessibility work to address critical gaps.

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Appendix A: Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver's  
Accessibility Strategy

## TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES, EMBEDDING CHANGE:

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### THE CITY OF VANCOUVER'S ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY (Phase 1)



The City of Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy̓ əm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓ wú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Peoples, who have lived on these lands since time immemorial.

As a City of Reconciliation, the City of Vancouver has committed to “form a sustained relationship of mutual respect and understanding with local First Nations and the urban Indigenous community.” This is an ongoing and evolving commitment, and one that is essential to our path forward.



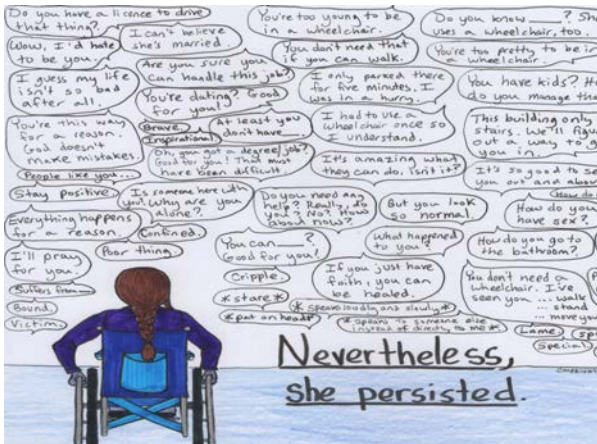
# Preface and Acknowledgements

"I would like the City of Vancouver to take the lead on accessibility."

- Dialogue Participant

In Vancouver, persons with disabilities, families, caregivers and disability organizations are championing accessibility by creating and advocating for inclusive and accessible policies, spaces, services and opportunities. The community has rallied to challenge society's ableist narrative and foundation in the city. This leadership is reflected in the contributions of community organizers, residents, allies and leaders of the disability community who have provided important input in throughout the development of this accessibility strategy.

*Inspiration. Burden. Less than. In need of help from others.*



The culture of ableism is very real and very much engrained in our society and everyday language. Because of this, words like the above and corresponding image to the left highlight some of the many perceptions and stigmas that persons with disabilities face on a daily basis. Society tends to hold many overarching generalizations and assumptions about persons with disabilities which are rooted in ableism. Ableism refers to a form of prejudice and discrimination in which people born with disabilities, or who acquire disabilities at some point in their lives, are believed to be less capable and less valuable than those who are able-bodied. Unfortunately, much of the population, including those with disabilities, have internalized ableism and, therefore, intentional actions must be taken to counter it.

Image Description: A person sitting in a wheelchair with their back towards us with the statement, "Nevertheless, she persisted." There are dialogue bubbles all around the person with statements such as, "Wow, I'd hate to be you." "It's amazing what they can do, isn't it?" "But you look so normal." "I guess my life isn't so bad after all."

The City of Vancouver is demonstrating its commitment to upholding international, national and provincial legislation including the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Accessible Canada Act*, the *Accessible BC Act* and the *BC Human Rights Code*, through the development and implementation of

Vancouver's accessibility strategy, *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change (Phase 1)*. The strategy aims to raise the collective consciousness of City staff both on how persons with disabilities experience the city as both a place and an organization. Together with the staff, it can identify, address and reduce or eliminate ableism and barriers to full participation in city life. Through implementation of the strategy, the City will contribute to overturning ableist narratives and achieving the vision of a city in which *all* people feel welcomed, included and valued.

The strategy is a collective effort developed with the guidance and input from an Accessibility Task Force and an Internal Staff Working group. Their expertise, knowledge and personal understanding of accessibility issues provided invaluable advice to the process. Community engagement with persons with disabilities, families, caregivers and service providers has also been fundamental to the development of the strategy. Engagement involved listening and hearing stories from people who experience first-hand what it is like to move around the community, participate in their neighbourhoods, attend events with friends and families, and contribute to city life.

*Transforming Attitudes Embedding Change* is a call for change. Its goal is to ensure that work is done collectively to build inclusive and accessible communities so that persons with disabilities have equitable access and a voice in civic matters. The strategy is a call to action to put persons with disabilities at the forefront so that they feel and are valued, respected, and openly welcomed within city policies, procedures, programs and services. Throughout Phase 1 of the development of the strategy, staff built relationships with many persons with



disabilities and accessibility leaders who shared their stories with authenticity, honesty, and humility. Staff express their deep appreciation to all community partners, residents and colleagues for your support and contribution thus far. Staff would like to express special thanks to Task Force members, representatives of Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC) for their leadership, vision and advice in the development of the strategy. It is crucial that staff and community continue to work collaboratively to ensure that the strategy proposed gets embedded throughout the City, advancing and accessibility for all.

# Executive Summary

*Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: the City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1)* outlines the City of Vancouver's (the City's) commitment to supporting the full participation of persons with disabilities by establishing and maintaining inclusive services, programs and infrastructure and by identifying, removing and preventing barriers.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), disability is an umbrella term that describes impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, and the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors). For the purpose of this strategy and in alignment with the *Accessible Canada Act*, the term disability also includes "any physical, mental health, cognitive, intellectual, sensory or age-related impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. These disabilities may be visible or invisible and may be permanent, temporary or episodic. As well, disability can intersect with various identities of an individual which may result in compounding effects". Various terms are used to describe the disability community, including 'persons with disabilities' and 'disabled people.' The term '[disabled people](#)' is used in alignment with the social model of disability which recognizes that people with impairments are disabled by society through the effects of ableist attitudes and systems rather than by the functioning of people's minds, bodies and senses.

**The City uses the term "persons with disabilities" to include people who experience physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related impairments, inclusive of seniors and people with lived experience of mental health challenges or substance use- related disabilities.**

In September 2018, Vancouver City Council directed staff to work with an Accessibility Task Force, comprised of members of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and the Seniors Advisory Committee, as well as the (former) People with Lived Experience Advisory on Mental Health and Substance Use, to develop phase 1 of an accessibility strategy. *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change* is the result of this collective process, which puts forward definitions, principles, and accessibility commitments. This strategy sets the direction for addressing gaps and recommended priority areas to improve accessibility within the City and the community, and it is an initial step in a transformational change that must occur over time. There will be ongoing work and future priority actions will be explored as an accessibility lens is continuously applied to City planning, policies and services, and as the City's progress is monitored and evaluated through an accountability framework. While the strategy has been in development, accessibility legislation was enacted at both the federal and provincial government levels. The *Accessible Canada Act* was passed in June 2019 and the *Accessible BC Act* was passed in June 2021. These new pieces of legislation reinforce the responsibility of the City of Vancouver to uphold and protect the human rights of persons with disabilities and other rights holders, as also outlined in the *BC Human Rights Code*.

The work of making Vancouver accessible is broad and complex and calls for an expanded focus beyond persons with disabilities: this is a long-term commitment that will require collective and intentional actions across all City departments. In order for this strategy to be implemented well, all City staff need to question our own biases and adopt new ways of thinking. This, in turn, will transform the City's planning, policies and services. Implementation will require resources, staff time and space to shift to a culture of vulnerability when advancing this work. A culture of vulnerability as described by Dr. Brene Brown:

*"As it is a state of being that is open, curious, and ready to have brave conversations with one another, experience each other's uniqueness, and to be willing to 'show up' in the space. When relationships reach this state of vulnerability we are in a better position to work together. Instead of seeing a body not able to perform in a "normative way", vulnerability creates opportunities where we can question, seek answers,*

*and explore creative solutions together. It is a recognition that there is not one right way of doing things. Each of us needs to be transformed; dismantling our own stereotypes and assumptions, so that we can connect with each other, build relationships, and have opportunities where we can learn from each other.”*  
**Adapted from Dr. Brown, Brene (2015) “Daring Greatly”**

Actions must occur in conjunction with attitudinal change to maximize effectiveness and to evolve a culture of accessibility throughout the City. Staff will need to work closely with communities, build relationships and have brave conversations with one another to develop solutions to the challenges of inequitable access. By continuing to work together, we can evolve towards full access and inclusion as our understanding of the importance of accessibility grows.

The work proposed in *Transforming Culture, Embedding Change* is organized into eight distinct focus areas as identified by the Accessibility Task Force and confirmed by the community engagement process. Seven of the eight focus areas align with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. The eighth focuses on advocacy with other orders of government and reflects the community’s recognition that the City is only one of many players required to work together to ensure accessibility for all. The eight areas of focus and accompanying accessibility goals are:

*Focus Area 1: Built Environment and Public Spaces*

Goal: A built environment with Universal Design Principles where City projects and public spaces incorporate the highest level of accessibility standards so that everyone can access all physical infrastructure in the city.

*Focus Area 2: Transportation Services, Policies and Programs*

Goal: Apply universal design principles to guide transportation planning and design, to connect people to their daily needs regardless of their abilities.

*Focus Area 3: Housing Policies, Programs & Design*

Goal: The City continues to work to create accessible, affordable, market and non-market housing for persons with disabilities.

*Focus Area 4: Information and Communication*

Goal: The City provides accessible information to connect and engage with persons with disabilities by providing communication supports, accessible websites, formats and digital content.

*Focus Area 5: Employment*

Goal: The City increases opportunities for persons with disabilities to contribute to the workforce and commits to supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace for all.

*Focus Area 6: Governance and Engagement*

Goal: Reduce barriers to participation in civic life using an equity-focused approach and provide equitable access to municipal programs and services.

*Focus Area 7: Capacity and Collaboration*

Goal: Together with non-profit organizations and persons with disabilities, build capacity and awareness to increase collaboration in the sector and address accessibility challenges in the community.

*Focus Area 8: Advocacy and Working with other Orders of Government along with other Agencies*

Goal: Work in integrated and collaborative ways with all other orders of government so that persons with disabilities are able to move, lead, participate, and contribute in their communities.

City departments outlined their current and developing accessibility actions along with their respective project leads, in relation to the focus areas, as examples below:

**Action:** Review the Current *Vancouver Building By-law* and *Standards of Maintenance By-law Section 9 on Building Elevators*. Identify amendments and/or actions to ensure that housing operators have realistic plans and the necessary tools to provide assistance to residents who have difficulty with stairs when elevators are broken and/or out of service.

*Lead: Development, Buildings & Licensing*

**Action:** Ensure that services provided by the City's Renter Office, including the Renter Enquiry Line, Renter Services Grants and proposed Renter Services Centre, meet the accessibility needs of renters.

*Lead: Arts Culture and Community Services (Renter Office)*

**Action:** Advocate for plain language principles in all published print and digital/social content where CEC is involved in creation and review.

*Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications and Technology Services (Digital Channels)*

**Action:** Continue to develop a comprehensive, progressive, cumulative curriculum and pathway for Justice, Equity, Decolonization, and Inclusion (JEDI) learning.

*Lead: Equity Office*

**Action:** Apply an accessibility lens to emergency response and recovery plans to centre the needs of persons with disabilities in disasters and emergencies.

*Lead: Vancouver Emergency Management Agency*

For a comprehensive list of departmental accessibility actions, refer to Appendix 6, *Current Accessibility Priorities Underway & Community Recommendations by Focus Areas*.

Community engagement identified four approaches necessary to drive the implementation of the strategy. These approaches will be core considerations for action prioritization and further community engagement in the roll out of the strategy.

1. Education and awareness, as required practice to collectively address ableism, reduce stigma and understand the complex realities of persons with disabilities.
2. A racial justice lens, and the recognition that racism and ableism are intertwined. When a racialized individual also identifies as a person with a disability, it adds another layer of complexity and oppression to their daily experiences. A racial justice lens acknowledges that injustices are rooted in colonial ideals of white supremacy, and that addressing discrimination and racism is part of the solution to accessibility challenges;
3. Intersectionality, recognizing that the connection between social categories such as race, class, ability, gender, etc. creates overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage<sup>1</sup>; and;
4. A social inclusion approach, promoting interaction and meaningful engagement that reduces social isolation for people with disabilities, creating opportunities to freely move, participate, lead, and contribute to the community.

In order to monitor, evaluate and communicate progress in the focus areas identified in the strategy and the related actions set by City departments, *Transforming Attitudes Embedding Change* proposes an accountability framework, which outlines a plan for assessing how the City is advancing accessibility goals, in addition to meeting a legislated requirement under the *Accessible BC Act*. The framework includes guiding principles, a collaborative structure for monitoring, timelines and reporting mechanisms. The accountability framework aims to provide transparency, secure the integrity of the Strategy and ensure follow through on the objectives set by the City departments.

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<sup>1</sup> Intersectionality 101: what is it and why is it important? - Womankind Worldwide (2022); <https://www.womankind.org.uk/intersectionality-101-what-is-it-and-why-is-it-important/>

Disabilities are part of the human condition. Everyone is likely to experience a temporary, periodic, or permanent change in their functioning at some point in their life, and those who live to old age will likely experience increasing difficulties in functioning and cognition. Yet, despite this pervasiveness, persons with disabilities experience discrimination and face multiple barriers in their everyday lives. Our ableist society assigns value based on one's (dis)ability and other social categories: people born with a disability, or who acquire a disability at some point in their life, have for a long time been seen as less valuable than those who are able-bodied.<sup>2</sup> *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change* creates the impetus to elevate the narratives of persons with disabilities. It is a call to challenge stereotypes, assumptions, and ableism. The strategy advances the City's commitment to supporting the full participation of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities need to be seen, engaged, recognized, and valued in communities.

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<sup>2</sup> [Ableism 101 - What is Ableism? What Does it Look Like? \(accessliving.org\); www.accessliving.org/newsroom/blog/ableism-101/](https://www.accessliving.org/newsroom/blog/ableism-101/), 2019

## Table of Contents

### Preface & Acknowledgements Executive Summary

#### **SECTION 1: Why Accessibility?**

Ableism and Accessibility  
Statement of Accessibility Commitments

#### **SECTION 2: Overview of Accessibility & the Vancouver Context**

Community Profile

#### **SECTION 3: A New Perspective of Accessibility**

Transforming the Culture  
Methodology: Developing the Strategy  
Community Recommended Approaches

#### **SECTION 4: Accessibility Strategy- *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change*: Strategy Components**

Definition and Principles  
Goals and Objectives  
Key Focus Areas and Community Priorities

1. Built Environment and Public Spaces
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Information and Communication
5. Employment
6. Governance and Engagement
7. Capacity and Collaboration
8. Advocacy and Working with Other Orders of Government along with other Agencies

Accountability Framework

#### **SECTION 5: Conclusion**

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1	Organizations involved in Community Engagement
Appendix 2	Community Engagement Report
Appendix 3	Definitions of Terms
Appendix 4	Background of the Work & Aligning the Strategy
Appendix 5	Jurisdictional Scan
Appendix 6	Current Accessibility Priorities Underway & Community Recommendations by Focus Areas
Appendix 7	Breakdown of Voices Heard by Community along with our Advisory Committees

## SECTION 1: Why Accessibility?

## Ableism and Accessibility

Persons with disabilities face discrimination and experience multiple barriers in their everyday life, rooted in the system of ableism. Ableism is a largely unconscious mindset based on learned values and prejudices. It is based on the construction of disabled bodies and minds as inferior, and used to justify neglect, abuse and dismissal of people with disabilities, who are seen as having less value, burdensome and unprofitable in a capitalist society. An ableist society assigns advantage and disadvantage based on one's (dis)ability and other social categories. In an ableist society, people born with a disability, or who acquire a disability at some point in their lives, are seen as being less valuable than those who are able-bodied.<sup>3</sup>

"Paperwork, complicated processes to access things e.g. having to go in person, requiring difficult to obtain documentation, having to disclose disability, money, housing! Capitalist system in general but that is not limited to Vancouver."

- Survey Participant

Historically, based in the 19th century and early 20th, persons with disabilities were segregated to residential institutions such as psychiatric hospitals, schools for the blind, houses of Refuge and church-run homes, which collectively housed large numbers of people with mental health issues, intellectual disabilities and physical disabilities. Perspectives started to change after the First World War when thousands of injured and disabled veterans returned to Canada. Many veterans with visual impairments,

mobility challenges and psychological disturbances (such as shell shock) encountered great difficulty reintegrating into mainstream society. As a result, non-profit organizations, such as War Amps, were established to advocate on behalf of veterans and deliver services that were lacking in the community; rehabilitation, vocational training in sheltered workshops, employment counselling and placement services were designed to return ex-soldiers to the workforce as quickly as possible.<sup>4</sup> Over many years, because of the dedicated work of parents, disability right activists and allies lobbying all levels of government to enact barrier-free policies and legislation, persons with disabilities have been more visible and have increased access to employment, recreation, [transportation](#), [education](#) and [housing](#) throughout the community. Activists work to build a sense of identity within the disability community by highlighting common experiences of inaccessibility and [discrimination](#). Many organizations and advocacy groups have been established to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

While persons with disabilities are more visibly and a part of our community today, unfortunately the culture of ableism is still engrained in our society and everyday language. Ableism is both explicit and implicit. Members of an ableist society, including persons with disabilities, tend to unconsciously adopt ableist thoughts, behaviors, attitudes, and experiences. The majority of persons with disabilities continue to face attitudinal barriers because of the overarching generalizations, assumptions and patronizing thoughts that are still prevalent in society. Some of these include beliefs that persons with disabilities are always dependent on others and the system, and are incapable of contributing to society. Conversely, persons with disabilities may be viewed as "an inspiration" because of what they face every day. Whatever a person with disabilities does may be considered to be "well done", implying that others should be thankful for whatever level of effort is put out by a person with disabilities. Ableism is also manifested in a vast variety of other ways: for example, stairs being the only option to enter a building, having to enter a building from the rear where the only accessible entrance is located, or planning a meeting without considering the sight, hearing or other needs of the individuals who will be in attendance.

<sup>3</sup> Home - Ableism - LibGuides at University of the Fraser Valley (ufv.ca); (2009), <https://libguides.ufv.ca/Ableism>

<sup>4</sup> Disability Rights Movement in Canada | The Canadian Encyclopedia; (2015), <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/disability-rights-movement#:~:text=The%20Canadian%20disability%20rights%20movement,cent%20of%20the%20Canadian%20population.>



Everyone has a responsibility to reflect on and challenge ableism and to disrupt ableist attitudes, beliefs and practices when they show up in daily interactions. The dichotomy of disabled versus non-disabled bodies denies the broad spectrum of human abilities and functioning and negates the potential of working together towards a collective understanding. Countless work has been undertaken by persons with disabilities, families, caregivers, disability organizations and others over time to change the narrative from ableism to accessibility and inclusion.

“Just hearing this is making my palm sweat hearing all these stories. At the root, go to the root. If you don't go to the root, you still have the problem. That kind of ableism in so many different ways. Stagnant non-inclusive thinking. It's these repetition of cycles that you think you've made some headway and then it goes right back.”

- Dialogue Participant

“I feel like where communities have been silenced, oppressed or treated unfairly in the past, people don't want to step forward and say anything, even if given the chance to do so. History dictates that what they're saying is falling on deaf ears, it's not going to be taken into consideration or fully followed up on. Just changing the day to day interactions with other communities, might go a long way in getting people to come forward and speak up about what they want to see and how to make this happen. It is about respect. Making people feel safe to contribute.”

- Dialogue Participant

The City of Vancouver has a responsibility to uphold and protect human rights, including creating an accessible city for everyone and prioritizing the needs of persons with disabilities. The *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) and more recently the *Global Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) have sought ways to challenge ableism and to urge countries and municipal governments to take concrete actions to be more accessible and inclusive. Acknowledging the harmful attitudes and system of ableism that exists within this municipality is a critical step in addressing issues that stakeholders have identified as key to making Vancouver an inclusive, welcoming and accessible city for all.

In addition to the international context, both the federal and provincial governments passed accessibility laws: the *Accessible Canada Act* was passed in June 2019 and the *Accessible BC Act* was passed in June 2021. The Provincial government has an important role to play in addressing accessibility. This includes funding programs such as the Persons with Disability Income Assistance, the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program, and funding for major infrastructure such as Transit. The Province also develops the BC Building Code, which establishes regulation for the design and construction of buildings in B.C. With the *Accessible BC Act*, the Province will be establishing requirements for municipalities and will be undertaking more key actions over the next several years. As of 2022, all public sector organizations are required to establish an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan and to create public feedback mechanisms. The Province is also expected to make changes to the next BC Building Code within the next two years, requiring new buildings to be more accessible for all people.

The City of Vancouver is required to meet legislative requirements and building code updates as set out by the Province, and also plays an important role in advancing accessibility. At a high level, the City does this through:

- Regulating development through the Vancouver Building By-law and Zoning and Development By-law
- Developing strategies and policies to enable or incentivize City priorities
- Providing funding in the form of grants to external non-profit organizations or advocacy groups
- Working with community and advocating to government partners to advance priorities and policies

With both of these new pieces of legislation, it will reinforce the responsibility of the City of Vancouver to uphold and protect the human rights of persons with disabilities and other rights holders, as also outlined in the *BC Human Rights Code*.

### Statement of Accessibility Commitments



On November 3, 2021, the City Council endorsed five accessibility commitments. The foundation of these commitments is the principle of “Nothing about us without us...,”<sup>5</sup> a recognition that the City needs to make space and elevate the voices and leadership of persons with disabilities in community.

<b>The City of Vancouver Commits to:</b>	<b>Description:</b>
Respecting the rights, dignity and independence of persons with disabilities over the life course	<p>Because of ableist attitudes and behaviors, people with disabilities have often been treated as ‘less than’ those who are able bodied. To challenge these harmful attitudes, and in alignment with the <i>BC Human Rights Code</i> and the <i>Accessible BC Act</i>, efforts towards making the City more accessible start by respecting and upholding the rights, dignity and independence of people with disabilities.</p> <p>These efforts must take into account that disabilities can occur at any time in a person’s life and maximizing inclusion will require differing adaptations and interventions depending on age and circumstance.</p>
Fostering a safe environment where all people feel valued, included and a sense of belonging	Many marginalized groups have pointed out that they do not experience the city as a safe place, and that they do not feel like they belong. Safety, both physical and psychological, and belonging are fundamental to building the accessible city envisioned, and thus, this is a core focus of the Accessible Strategy.
Creating opportunities for persons with disabilities to be involved in decision-making and to participate fully in all aspects of city life	An accessible city is one where everyone, and in particular, people with disabilities can fully participate in employment, entertainment, recreation, etc. Because they are the experts of their own lives and know what is best for their communities, it is important for people with disabilities to have opportunities to be at decision-making tables.
Demonstrating how the knowledge and perspectives of persons with disabilities are integrated across all City processes, policies and decision-making	As the City works to reflect the diversity of Vancouver’s population in its staff complement, attracting and retaining employees with disabilities is a critical part of this effort. Demonstrating how the views and perspectives of persons with disabilities are integrated in all City processes is an important step towards removing barriers and building trust between the City and disability communities.
Listening to and addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in City programs, services, and physical infrastructure	The majority of society is designed mainly through the lenses of those who are able bodied. This means that many City programs, services and physical infrastructure are not accessible to persons with disabilities. An inclusive and accessible City, is one that listens to and commits to addressing the needs of those who are most negatively impacted by its planning processes, policies, services and the built environment.

<sup>5</sup> [www.un.org/development/desa/international-day-persons-with-disabilities-3-december/international-day-of-disabled-persons-2004-nothing-about-us-without-us.html](http://www.un.org/development/desa/international-day-persons-with-disabilities-3-december/international-day-of-disabled-persons-2004-nothing-about-us-without-us.html), December 2004

# SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF ACCESSIBILITY & THE VANCOUVER CONTEXT

## Community Profile

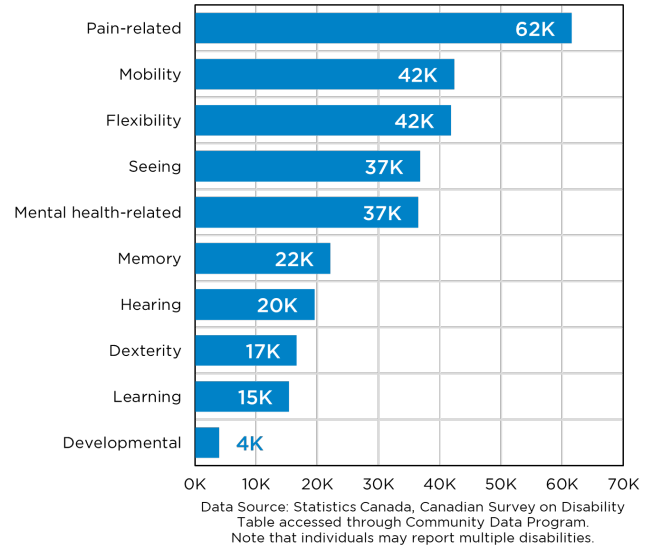
Persons with disabilities are considered “the world’s largest minority”, making up an estimated 650 million people globally.<sup>6</sup> It is a minority group that almost everyone will be part of at some point in their lives, but not everyone experiences disabilities in the same way or to the same degree.

Limited data is available to understand the spectrum of experience with disabilities among people in Vancouver, however the following information provides a snapshot of the numbers of people in Vancouver currently living with disabilities.

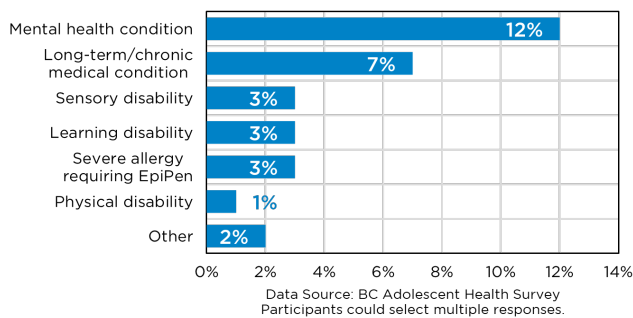
The most robust local data source is the Canadian Survey on Disability, administered the year following each census. However, this survey only includes people 15 and older who reported having limitations on their daily activities in the census.

In the most recent Canadian Survey on Disability, more than one in five people in Vancouver reported having an ongoing disability, representing at least 107,000 people age 15 and older.<sup>7</sup> There are ten categories of disability reported by Statistics Canada. Many people experience disabilities in multiple categories, making this population diverse in their identities and experiences. The most frequently reported disabilities by people in Vancouver are related to pain, mobility, flexibility, sight and mental health.

**City of Vancouver Population Age 15+ with Indicated Type of Disability, 2017**



**Vancouver Youth (Grades 7-12) Reporting Disability or Health Condition, 2018**



Children and youth under 15 are not included in these numbers, but people of all ages live with disabilities. As of the 2021-2022 school year, 12% of children in the Vancouver School District are designated as having special needs.<sup>8</sup> In the BC Adolescent Health Survey (2018<sup>9</sup>), 24% of youth in grades 7 to 12 reported a health condition or disability, with the highest rates reported for mental health and long-term medical conditions.

Disabilities may be temporary or ongoing, arising from age, genetics, injury, illness or other experiences. The rate at which people are likely to experience ongoing disabilities increases with age: 45% of people age 65 and older live

with disabilities, compared to 16% of people age 15 to 64.<sup>10</sup> However, in absolute numbers most people with disabilities are younger than age 65. The Canadian Survey on Disability (2017) estimates 69,000 people age 15 to 64 with a disability, and 38,000 age 65 and older.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Enable, Fact Sheet on Persons with Disabilities. <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/toolaction/pwdfs.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, accessed through Community Data Program.

<sup>8</sup> BC Ministry of Education, 2021/2022 student enrollment data for Vancouver School District.

<sup>9</sup> McCreary Centre Society, 2018, BC Adolescent Health Survey, [https://mcs.bc.ca/about\\_bcahs](https://mcs.bc.ca/about_bcahs)

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, accessed through Community Data Program.

Vancouver's population is aging. There were 113,000 people age 65 and older in Vancouver as of the 2021 census.<sup>11</sup> This is a 16% increase since 2016, and five times the growth rate of people under age 65. Meeting the needs of this growing population of older adults who are also more likely to experience different types of disability emphasizes the importance of Vancouver becoming an accessible and age-friendly city.

Although age 65 is often used as a benchmark for identifying older adults and seniors, it is important to note that people with disabilities experience aging in different ways. People's disabilities change over time, often becoming more complex and challenging to deal with as they age. People with disabilities may also experience a faster aging process.<sup>12</sup> Programs and supports for older adults that rely solely on a person's numerical age to determine eligibility may therefore leave out a number of people who need those services.

Among people surveyed in the 2020 Homeless Count in the City of Vancouver<sup>13</sup>:

- 23% reported a learning disability or cognitive impairment;
- 35% reported a physical disability;
- 44% reported a medical condition or illness;
- 45% reported a mental health issue;
- 60% reported addiction.

As noted above, at least 37,000 people age 15 and older in Vancouver have an ongoing disability related to mental health, but many more people in Vancouver experience mental health challenges. In 2014, 20% of adults in the city rated their mental health status as fair or poor.<sup>14</sup> During the COVID-19 pandemic, population health surveys showed that these numbers were increasing. As of spring 2021, 35% of adults in Vancouver reported that they had poor mental health, and 59% reported that their mental health had worsened during the pandemic.<sup>15</sup>

People in Vancouver continue to be impacted by record overdose deaths caused by a toxic drug supply. At least 2,300 people have died in Vancouver since a provincial health emergency was declared in 2016.<sup>16</sup> A safe drug supply is the most urgent priority to address this crisis, but an upstream cause of this emergency is a longstanding mental health crisis and lack of supports for people experiencing challenges such as chronic illness, pain or injuries.

Experiences and accessibility needs associated with disabilities, aging and mental health should not be conflated, but they are interconnected. These experiences intersect with each other and other determinants of health. Disabilities impact people's perceived mental health: in the Canadian Community Health Survey, only 59% of people with a disability or chronic health condition perceived their own mental health as good, compared to 88% of people without disabilities.<sup>17</sup> Persons with disabilities, seniors, older adults and people with mental health challenges have been disproportionately impacted by health inequities for a long time, and many of these inequities were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Accessibility Outcomes*

Data on the outcomes experienced by persons with disabilities and the intersections with other aspects of their identities is limited, so the data in this section provides only a partial picture. A key goal in the Accessibility Strategy's accountability framework is to access more disaggregated datasets to help measure ongoing progress toward becoming an accessible city. Further engagement, community-based research, and qualitative datasets are also essential.

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<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

<sup>12</sup> Access Independent Living Society, 2015. "Aging with a Disability".

<https://cilt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Aging-with-a-Disability-Focus-Group-Report.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Metro Vancouver 2020 Homeless Count results for City of Vancouver (<https://council.vancouver.ca/20201007/documents/pspc1presentation.pdf>)

<sup>14</sup> Vancouver Coastal Health/Fraser Health, 2013/2014 My Health My Community Survey.

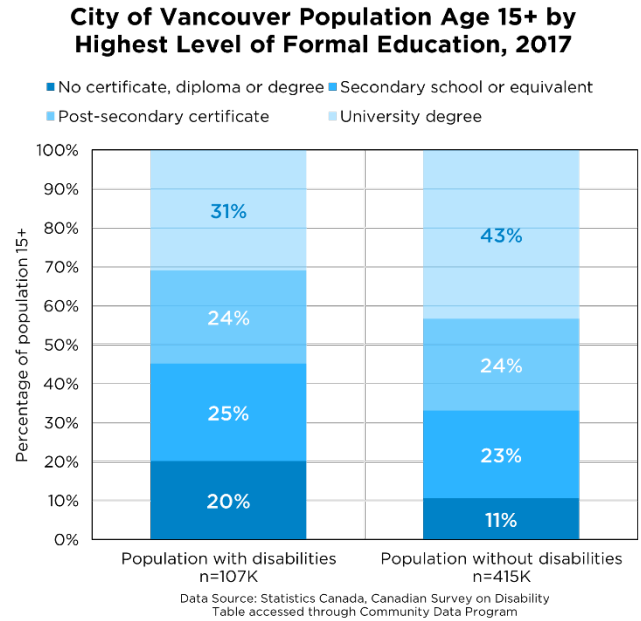
<sup>15</sup> BC Centre for Disease Control, COVID SPEAK Survey, spring 2021.

<sup>16</sup> BC Coroners Service, Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths in BC January 1, 2012 – February 28, 2022. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/birth-adoption-death-marriage-and-divorce/deaths/coroners-service/statistical/illicit-drug.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017/2018 Canadian Community Health Survey Public Use Microdata File, analysis by City of Vancouver staff.

The Canadian Survey on Disability includes data on people’s demographic characteristics, levels of formal education, and employment. Some key findings include:

- Persons with disabilities face barriers in the education system. 20% of people with disabilities did not receive a high school certificate. 31% have completed a university degree, compared to 43% of people without disabilities. While this partially reflects that the population with disabilities is older, it also indicates clear gaps in access to education and the opportunities that come with it.
- Among the population age 25 to 64, 75% of persons with disabilities are in the labour force. However, they are more likely to face gaps and barriers. The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is 25% higher than for people without disabilities, and median after-tax income for persons with disabilities is less than \$31,000 per year.<sup>18</sup> With limited data comparisons, it is assumed that this income is lower as compared to people without disabilities. However, it is recognized that this amount is substantially below the living wage needed to live in Vancouver.



Although the Canadian census does not include data on persons with disabilities, it does include screening questions on the limitations that people face in their daily activities. These questions are not intended to measure the experience of persons with disabilities, but can be used to identify areas in which persons with disabilities are more likely to experience gaps and barriers. In the 2016 census, some indicators include:<sup>19</sup>

- Across all age groups, 31% of the population report that they experienced limitations on daily activities. This includes 10% that “always”, 4% that “often”, and 17% that “sometimes” experience these limitations.
- 23% of people with limitations on their daily activities have incomes below the after-tax low income measure, a higher rate than the overall population.
- 22% of households with at least one person experiencing limitations on their daily activities are living in core housing need, meaning that their housing does not meet standards of affordability, suitability or adequacy for the people living in them.
- People with limitations on their daily activities are less likely to be living with a spouse or partner, and more likely to be living in households that have multiple families.
- People with limitations on their daily activities are more likely to be working in arts and culture, administration or public services than the overall Vancouver workforce. They are less likely to be working in finance, management or scientific and technical services.

Many people in Vancouver experience social isolation and loneliness. Only half of Vancouverites have four or more people in their support networks.<sup>20</sup> Almost one in five live alone.<sup>21</sup> When these factors intersect with experiences of disability, aging and/or mental health challenges profound inequities can result. A major report on social isolation and loneliness among seniors identified that there are also causal relationships between disabilities, isolation and loneliness. Isolation and loneliness can *cause* physical health challenges rather than

<sup>18</sup> Statistics Canada, 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, accessed through Community Data Program. The data outlined is very limited, so there’s only data relating to persons with disabilities with no comparison.

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, custom tables on populations and households with activity limitations accessed through Community Data Program. Note that Statistics Canada does not verify or certify data on activity limitations so they should be used with caution.

<sup>20</sup> Vancouver Coastal Health/Fraser Health, 2013/2014 My Health My Community Survey.

<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population.

being the result of them.<sup>22</sup> The report recommends a number of actions government and service providers can take to address the causes of isolation and loneliness and create more accessible physical and social environments for seniors and older adults.

## SECTION 3: A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF ACCESSIBILITY

### Transforming the Culture

Through implementing *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: A City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy*, the City is positioned to challenge people to unlearn biases about persons with disabilities and to counter ableism within the City's policies, practices, services and infrastructure.

An accessible City benefits us all. When there are curb cuts on sidewalks, not only do wheelchair users benefit, those with strollers and on mobility scooters also benefit. When we prioritize those who experience the most need, we all benefit because there are doing better. This work is about evolving the culture of the City through addressing systemic barriers, committing to education, improving and expanding service delivery, and creating a welcoming City and work environment for people with disabilities. Ultimately, we each have a role to play in challenging the biases and stereotypes that exist about persons with disabilities. This starts by naming ableist acts and language when we encounter them, and telling different stories about disability. In order for this strategy

It's so important that we figure out a way to fix these problems and make things more accessible for people in a dignified and inclusive way that gives people pride in the space that they live in.

- Dialogue Participant

to be implemented well, all City staff need to question our own biases and adopt new ways of thinking. This, in turn, will transform the City's planning, policies and services. In order to dismantle existing attitudes and behaviours, and challenge the status quo and unconscious biases, the City needs to build a **"culture of vulnerability"**. A culture of vulnerability acts in opposition to the generalizations of persons with disabilities. A culture of vulnerability as described by Dr. Brene Brown:

*"As it is a state of being that is open, curious, and ready to have brave conversations with one another, experience each other's uniqueness, and to be willing to 'show up' in the space. When relationships reach this state of vulnerability we are in a better position to work together. Instead of seeing a body not able to perform in a "normative way", vulnerability creates opportunities where we can question, seek answers, and explore creative solutions together. It is a recognition that there is not one right way of doing things. Each of us needs to be transformed; dismantling our own stereotypes and assumptions, so that we can connect with each other, build relationships, and have opportunities where we can learn from each other."*

**Adapted from Dr. Brown, Brene (2015) "Daring Greatly"**

### Methodology Used to Develop the Strategy

Successful implementation of the Accessibility Strategy will require ongoing community engagement, therefore it was important that community engagement be a key component of the development of the strategy. A wide cross section of voices of persons with disabilities needed to be kept at the centre. To better understand the experiences, challenges and needs of persons with disabilities, staff worked with disability organizations to invite participation from those not traditionally included. This involved hosting focus groups, issuing a targeted survey to the members of the disability organizations worked with, and retroactive analysis of meeting minutes from two Council Advisory Committees, the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and the Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC).

While the engagement process focused on a variety of external stakeholders, each with their own set of expertise, perspectives and solutions, internal stakeholders also played a role in shaping the strategy. External stakeholders included: the Accessibility Task Force, the PDAC and SAC Council Advisory Committees, persons

<sup>22</sup> Eddy Elmer, Social Isolation and Loneliness Among Seniors in Vancouver: Strategies for Reduction and Prevention. City of Vancouver Seniors' Advisory Committee, May 2018. [https://www.vancouverseiorsadvisory.ca/wp-content/uploads/Vancouver\\_seniors\\_isolation\\_loneliness\\_recommendations\\_May2018.pdf](https://www.vancouverseiorsadvisory.ca/wp-content/uploads/Vancouver_seniors_isolation_loneliness_recommendations_May2018.pdf).



with disabilities, caregivers, support workers, family members and organizations serving people with disabilities. Internal stakeholders were represented by the Internal Staff Working Group which had members from multiple City departments.

The City is mindful of aligning the Accessibility Strategy with Federal and Provincial directions while building on the City's own historical accessibility work to ensure the Accessibility Strategy fits well with existing City policies and directions. This included staff reviewing seven years of meeting minutes of the SAC and PDAC. Both committees have advocated on many accessibility-related issues over many years. This wealth of comments and recommendations served as an additional source of qualitative data.

After the community engagement was completed and other information gathered and reviewed, the data was analyzed to generate themes, which were grouped according to the focus areas. Some of the information generated new themes as participants elaborated on their lived experiences. For example, "Advocacy with other Orders of Government" became a new focus area as people shared their experiences using Translink and HandyDart, the lack of opportunities within the education system, or challenges with Vancouver Coastal Health services. Subcategories were generated within each of the eight focus areas to highlight the various issues experienced by persons with disabilities.

After the data was analyzed, staff met with departments to share the results. Departments worked with their respective teams to develop some high-level action items. In some cases, action items were informed by the data shared, while others were already in consideration or underway. It is anticipated that the data gathered during this phase will have most impact on future engagement (generalized or specific), development and prioritization of additional actions, and on the evolution the accountability framework.

Refer to Appendix 7 for a breakdown of voices heard through the community engagement process.

## Community Recommended Approaches

*That people with a variety of intersecting identities should all have equitable access to spaces in their communities or communities they pass through.*

- Dialogue Participant

There were the four recommended approaches that were identified by community as being necessary to drive the implementation of *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change*. These approaches will be core considerations for action prioritization and further community engagement.

### 1. Education and Awareness

The City needs to lead the way in increasing education and awareness about accessibility. The City's accessibility strategy will be an impetus for change. It will be an opportunity to change ableist perceptions and behaviors that may consider persons with disabilities as afterthoughts. It acknowledge persons with disabilities as valued members of community with the right to fully participate. The strategy provides the framework for the City to evolve its accessibility culture.

### 2. Intersectionality

This theme invites us to recognize the multifaceted nature of identities, and the intersecting and compounding forms of discrimination.

While persons with disabilities share a common experience of physical and attitudinal barriers in an ableist society, it is important to also acknowledge and understand unique experiences of each person.

"Intersectionality - not a lot of thought given to: the intersection of race and equity and being a female and whether you're living alone or not, your age demographic, whether you are a child, a youth, a young adult, middle age, senior."

-Dialogue Participant

Persons with disabilities are diverse in their disabilities, gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, immigration status, among others. These compounding

identities have implications for how these individuals will fare in society.

Insights from community engagement and research have made it clear that there is no "one size fits all" approach to creating an accessible City. This was reinforced when some participants shared their varied backgrounds such as being a residential school survivor or from a different culture background. A "one size fits all" approach is an antithesis to accessibility as it does not recognize the nuances of people's lived experiences.

"Stigma is a barrier for accessibility especially for the people living with dementia. Creating those instances and opportunities to educate, as much as possible at all levels of the community and municipalities. And in all ways, where people are out and about. So that there is a deeper understanding of what it means to be living with dementia. What the impact is. And we have learned that being a dementia community doesn't mean that it is impactful or useful for people living only with dementia it is useful for many people with many diverse needs. So my first recommendation would definitely be that education piece, where we continue to have those conversations remove the stigma, so people feel comfortable talking about it."

- Dialogue Participant

"I think there needs to be continued connection to the community and not just jumping in for an occasion by-lawings dialogue session. They need to stop going to the same people over and over. They are getting the same answers but it's not representative of the disability community. I think sometimes when they go to the same people, those people are a little easier on the city than the city deserves to have be easy on. We need to have people who are experiencing it. I think this also speaks to not going to the same organizations that supposedly say that they are representing certain populations but are not representing that population or representing it poorly or only representing a very select group of that population. I think that's really important."

- Dialogue Participant

An intersectional approach works to avoid simplistic solutions that may further marginalize people and instead, moves towards more nuanced and inclusive approaches to City building. The necessity of creating space is vital as it allows each of us to be aware of the many layers of identities people bring to the table, both those identities that are visible and those that are not.

### 3. Social Inclusion

Social inclusion promotes interaction and meaningful engagement that reduces social isolation for people with disabilities, creating

opportunities to freely move, participate, lead, and contribute to the community.

"I really liked the point about belonging. Our mission and mandate is to support people of all disabilities to live with full and meaningful participation in the communities. So really, it's about meaningful participation."

- Dialogue Participant

Social inclusion means being able to choose where to go, what to do, where to work, and being able to participate in community. Participants expressed the craving for connection and a sense of belonging and the desire to feel valued as fellow community members. However, the inaccessibility of physical infrastructure and systems, and the negative attitudes encountered, makes it difficult for people with disabilities to make friends or

participate in community. Countering ableism and promoting inclusion go hand in hand. As ableism is reduced, barriers to accessibility will gradually decrease and the sense of inclusion and belonging will increase.

### 4. Racial Justice

Within the community engagement process, many participants noted that accessibility cannot be advanced by focusing only on the needs of persons with disabilities. Many persons with disabilities also face the compounding effects of racial injustice. Many of the participants that identified as having a racialized background voiced that

they experienced an elevated sense of social isolation and accessibility barriers because of their multiple identities.

Ableism and racism are intertwined, and inequities and injustices based on these forms of discrimination are rooted in the colonial ideals of white supremacy. Acknowledging this forces us to address discrimination and racism as part of the solution to accessibility challenges. There are different experiences for white persons with disabilities than for racialized people who are also disabled. While white people's disabilities detract from the inherent privilege of their whiteness, the disabilities of racialized people accentuate their supposed inferiority and in-humanity based on race. Even racialized people who are not disabled are harmed by ableism because it perpetuates a value system about people's intrinsic worth.<sup>23</sup>

"Accessibility including culture and Identities, the ways identity encompasses and the use of the word "anticipated". When I do my event, my community building I use the word, "Whole Heartedly" folks should be able to be present in the space without having to leave any parts of themselves at a door."

- Dialogue Participant

Ableism will always exist if racism exists because they are both tools of ongoing systemic oppression creating societal barriers for racialized people and persons with disabilities, and compounding barriers for those who identify as both.<sup>24</sup> The addition of race elevates the experiences of disability. Accessibility barriers will decrease when racialized people are also oppression-free.

## SECTION 4: STRATEGY COMPONENTS

### Definitions and Principles

The terms *disability*, *accessibility*, and *ableism* are defined within this document for the purposes of this strategy. However, while these definitions generally mirror those in legislation and conventions, it must be acknowledged that definitions are ever evolving.

The term *disability* and its definition has been contentious. Some people prefer not to be associated with the term because of its negative connotations of being dependent, incapable, or not able to contribute to community. However, others may use this concept as an identity or a community in which they (re)claim for themselves.

"When you have a developmental disability or a family member who has one, many things are not accessible. Whether it's employment, housing, things that we take for granted as typical people. I think we can make improvements in the way the City is run and what you demand of us as a community to participate. Accessibility has to be much wider than physical accessibility, which is generally where peoples' minds will go when you talk about accessibility."

- Dialogue Participant

*Accessibility* is a broad and complex term. One definition used is "the absence of barriers that prevent individuals and/or groups from participating, contributing and benefiting in all aspects of society." *Accessibility* can mean so many things to different individuals or groups, and they do not have to be within the disability community to

<sup>23</sup> [We can't address disability without addressing race. – Learn Play Thrive](#)

<sup>24</sup> <sup>24</sup> <https://disabilitiesphilanthropy.org/resource/intersections-between-race-and-ableism> (Intersections Between Racism and Ableism - Disability & Philanthropy Forum (disabilityphilanthropy.org))



experience inaccessibility. For example, an individual that does not know English is unable to read signs that are in English only. However, for the purposes of this strategy, term accessibility is being used in relation to persons with disabilities.

Refer to Section 1 for the definition of *ableism*.

For a complete list of definitions for terms referenced in this strategy see Appendix 3.

## Principles

The following principles that guide this strategy were developed in partnership with the Accessibility Task Force and confirmed through community engagement:

- **Inclusion:** All people must be able to participate fully in the community with dignity and individual autonomy.
- **Adaptability:** Disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology and attitudes change. We will maintain flexibility (adaptability) to adapt to the changes.
- **Diversity:** All people are respected for their differences and lived experiences, regardless of disabilities/abilities, as well as age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religious beliefs and immigration status.
- **Collaboration and Engagement:** Accessibility is a shared responsibility and requires the City to collaborate with people with lived experience, other stakeholders, levels of governments, agency partners, advocacy organizations, and service providers to work together to eliminate barriers and support innovations towards an accessible society.
- **Intersectionality:** Used more broadly to examine how multiple forms of systemic discrimination, including classism, racism, sexism, homophobia, trans antagonism, ageism, and ableism create compounding negative impacts for groups situated within these intersections.<sup>25</sup>
- **Respect:** All people are treated with respect (dignity) to further enable self-determination, self-esteem, and positive mental health, which leads to meaningful contributions to civil society, and thriving in the community.
- **Leadership and Accountability:** The City strives to lead by example in accessibility excellence by working towards maximum accessibility rather than just meeting minimum criteria. Senior leadership and staff in all areas and at all levels of the organization are accountable for advancing accessibility in their areas of responsibility.

## Intended Outcomes and Objectives

There is no “one size fits all” approach to creating an accessible city. *Transforming Culture, Embedding Change* will serve as a guide to raise our collective consciousness of how people with disabilities experience the city and how we can identify, address and prevent barriers to their full participation in city life.

The overarching goals of the accessibility strategy are to:

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<sup>25</sup> City of Vancouver (2021), Equity Framework

- Build inclusive communities and provide an accessible environment in which all individuals have equitable access to the City's services, programs and infrastructure.
- Build an inclusive and accessible work environment and culture within the City, in which all departments are supported and encouraged to embed an accessibility and inclusion lens into daily operations.
- Ensure that the City's hiring practices are inclusive and that barriers to the recruitment, retention, accommodation and advancement of employees with disabilities are removed, and where possible.

The objectives of the strategy are to:

- Respect the rights, dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Create an environment where all people feel valued, respected, and openly welcomed.
- Ensure equitable access and opportunity to participate in the planning, and design of municipal policies, programs, and services.
- Foster a culture of equity and inclusion for all residents, visitors and employees, including persons with disabilities, seniors, and other inequitably treated groups.
- Demonstrate City leadership by embedding an accessibility lens in the daily operations of every department.
- Value and incorporate the knowledge and perspectives of persons with disabilities within City's policies, programs, and services
- Recognize that individuals have complex identities that influence their perspectives and experiences, and that the barriers to inclusion may be compounded by intersecting identities.
- To ensure that the City's policies, regulations, and systems reflect the Accessibility Strategy; and
- Align the City's strategy with both federal and provincial accessibility legislation.

Appendix 4 provides background on the Accessibility Strategy and its alignment to other City work.

Appendix 5 is a Jurisdictional Scan that highlights various international, national and provincial accessibility legislation.

## Key Focus Areas & Community Priorities

*Transforming Culture, Embedding Change* is organized into eight focus areas identified by the Accessibility Task Force and confirmed by community engagement. This section outlines the specific goal and community priorities for each of the focus area. Seven of the eight focus areas align with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. The eighth focuses on advocacy with other orders of government, and reflects the community's recognition that the City is only one of many players required to work together to ensure accessibility for all.

Refer to Appendix 6, *Current Accessibility Priorities Underway & Community Recommendations by Focus Areas* for further details on current and developing departmental accessibility actions.

## 1. BUILT ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC SPACES

**Goal: The City will align the built environment with Universal Design principles<sup>26</sup> and seek to ensure City projects and public spaces incorporate the highest level of accessibility standards so that everyone can access all physical infrastructure in the city.**

<sup>26</sup> Mace, Robert, The Centre for Universal Design; (1988); Universal design is described as the concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life. [https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about\\_us/usronmace.htm](https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_us/usronmace.htm)

The built environment refers to buildings and public spaces. As a focus area for accessibility it includes: public facilities; arts, cultural, social and recreational infrastructure; public buildings; commercial facilities; and, public spaces such as parks, beaches, playgrounds and pedestrian pathways.

The built environment is regulated by the City of Vancouver through several mechanisms, including the Vancouver Building By-law, which is based on the British Columbia Building Code and includes provisions regulating the design and construction of buildings in the City of Vancouver. The Zoning & Development By-law establishes regulation for the development of land in Vancouver, including types of land uses allowed, the maximum height and density and siting of buildings, and other provisions necessary to enable good city building, along with parks, beaches, and playgrounds. There are other City by-laws and policies that also impact the built form.

The City has over the course of many years taken steps toward the goal of becoming a fully accessible city, one that values and strives to meet the needs of everyone, regardless of ability or age.

Building for accessibility is an important element of an inclusive Vancouver. The City has established accessibility standards for new construction that exceed requirements under the BC Building Code, and is working to eliminate barriers to access to City-owned and operated buildings, roads, walkways, pathways and parks.

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*What we heard from the community and other partners:*

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Adopting Universal Design principles as the overarching guiding approach to urban design, planning and the renovation of spaces across the city is key to success.

Persons with disabilities emphasized the need to be involved in decision-making and prioritization processes for the creation of accessible features and infrastructure projects that meet diverse needs, whether physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related impairments. Stakeholders highlighted the need to address accessibility requirements beyond visual and mobility related accommodations. Neurodivergence and intersectional considerations must also be included in accessibility planning and implementation.

Engagement participants recommended that accessibility experts within the City review development projects, and building/landscape/public space plans for accessibility. Staff knowledgeable about accessibility could also provide information to the community, and explain accessible building design and other matters related to construction, permits, retrofits and enforcement. Community noted that a centralized approach would help increase awareness of City processes and facilitate community input in planning and decision making.

Engagement participants also shared that safety and security are ongoing concerns in the daily experiences of persons with disabilities, and in order to have inclusive infrastructure and equitable access, more resources, processes and enforcement of regulations that prioritize accessibility are required.

*"I think the City has a responsibility and a lot of leverage around how they support physical inclusion, and how they reduce barriers to accessibility in terms of how folks live and work in the community. There is a lot of leverage the City has around rebates and things that could incentivize companies to prioritize accessibility for any existing or new facilities"*

- Dialogue Participant

*"I genuinely feel on a municipal level, Vancouver should not be waiting for the province or the feds to extend their hand to want to develop good accessibility plans. I think we should be sort of the benchmark for the rest of the country. What works for us is not going to necessarily work for Saskatchewan or other climates. I would like to see Vancouver take the lead as opposed to just waiting and having our politicians pass the buck"*

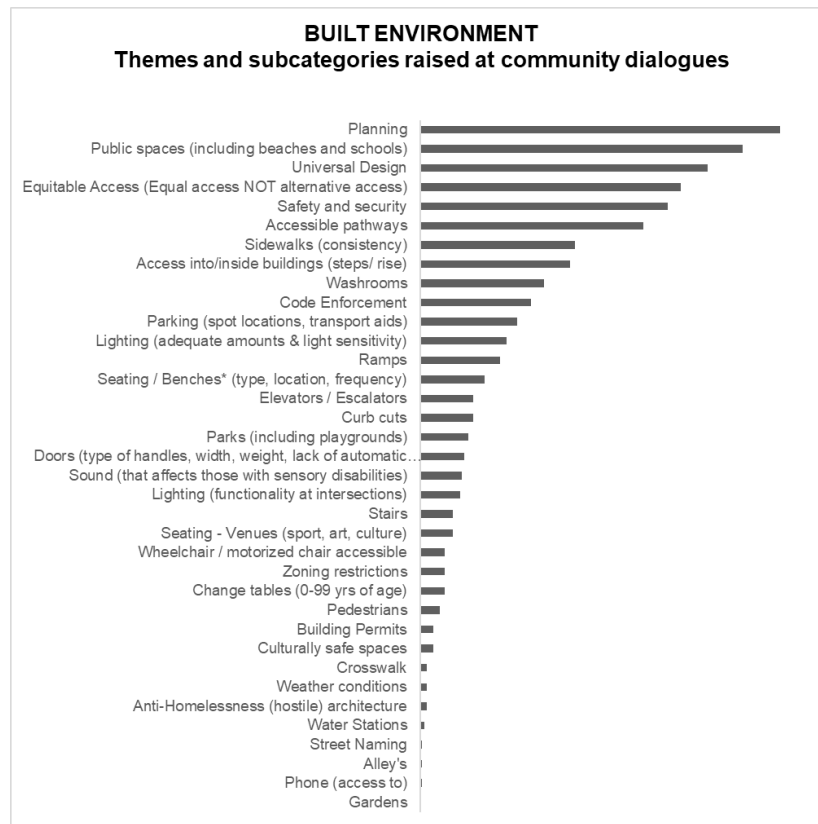
- Dialogue Participant

*"The strong preference toward neurotypicality and the intense lack of meaningful education on neurodivergency, provided by those with Neurodivergence. Transit issues, building access issues, performance demands normed off of "abled" bodies"*

- Survey Participant

Wayfinding was a topic that came up consistently throughout the community engagement process. Being able to navigate a space and orient oneself to go to a specific destination can be very daunting for persons with disabilities. Participants mentioned that there are opportunities to be more creative, innovative and intentional in wayfinding communication. Positioning and format of signage, including sounds and tactile options, can complement technological systems and apps. Other suggestions included having street names posted low enough for people using wheelchairs to read, and/or in big letters on the pavement.

Throughout the engagement process it was noted that there are barriers to accessing older infrastructure, including street sidewalks, (particularly during construction) and shared pathways in public spaces. Staff heard that inconsistency in the application of by-laws, policies and practices in public spaces, businesses and private buildings prevents full participation in the society by people with disabilities. There continues to be a lack of awareness about the importance of designing barrier-free and accessible spaces.



### Community Priorities

- To mandate universal design principles to guide design, policy, planning and development processes.
- To establish Vancouver-specific policies and standards that exceed current accessibility requirements for new construction in the city and that recognize the multidimensional contexts of persons with disabilities. These standards must be in alignment with accessibility standards that are to come into force under the *Accessible BC Act*.
- To identify accessibility experts within the City structure and set up a process for these staff to provide advice on accessibility in building design, landscape and public space plans, and to make recommendations to developers and address community inquiries related to construction, permits, enforcement and or retrofits requests.

- To develop and resource a process to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in accessibility related matters including permits, planning processes, enforcement and safety and security issues.
- To conduct a safety and security audit of public spaces and City facilities, using an intersectional lens, to identify improvements that need to meet updated accessibility standards.
- To leverage City functions to raise awareness and provide accessibility expertise to support developers, businesses and the broader community to design and create barrier-free and accessible spaces in all city infrastructure.
- To review and improve wayfinding systems so that they meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

## 2. TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

***GOAL: The City will apply universal design principles to guide transportation planning and design in order to connect people to their daily needs regardless of their abilities.***

Transportation is an important consideration for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities consistently describe how transportation challenges create barriers to accessing their daily needs, impacting their lives in important ways. Persons with disabilities face mobility barriers that may worsened with the severity and complexity of their individual conditions, and with limits on the accessibility of transportation options, the built environment and the support and assistance available. An accessible transportation system contributes to everyone meeting their daily needs and thriving in public life.

Transportation is complex, as issues often extend beyond municipal or even regional boundaries, and jurisdictions overlap. However, there are a number of ways the City can effect change in the transportation system. Some aspects of transportation are largely within the City's control, such as public rights-of-way, street infrastructure, land use, and much of the built environment. Other aspects fall under regional, provincial, or federal jurisdiction, including transit, ports, and regional infrastructure planning. In this latter case, the City is a partner, a stakeholder, and advocate for local transportation issues.

The City's role in transportation includes:

- Building and maintaining City-owned public rights-of-way and infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, and public space.
- Guiding development on private property, such as how buildings interface with the public right-of-way and parking requirements, through land use and urban design policies and guidelines.
- Managing how streets are used through rules, regulations, and pricing.
- Working with TransLink on providing access to transit.
- Advocacy and partnership with outside agencies on issues beyond the City's jurisdiction.
- Influencing residents' choices through education and management of streets.
- Providing leadership, both locally and around the world.

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*What we heard from the community and other partners:*

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Community members voiced the importance of universal design principles as the overarching guiding approach for transportation planning and design. Participants talked about the need to have optimal conditions for curbs,

ramps, elevators and signs to ensure adequate mobility and access to the transportation system, especially near transit stops and stations.

Wayfinding was especially relevant for persons with disabilities, particularly having options and formats that consider different types of disabilities including physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related.

Safety and personal security continue to be a concern on transit and near transit hubs, including having accessible washrooms nearby. Instances of discrimination and challenges navigating the transit network generate anxiety and stress for persons with disabilities. Participants brought up the importance of disability-related driver training for people working in the transit system or for ride-hailing companies. This would include education and awareness about ableism and disabilities.

Other concerns related to the safety of vulnerable seniors and persons with disabilities in interactions with other sidewalk users, both those walking and those using micro-mobility devices such as bikes and e-scooters.

Public input highlighted that creating more parking options and providing enforcement of accessible parking need to be prioritized, along with wider parking spots and street parking for persons with disabilities.

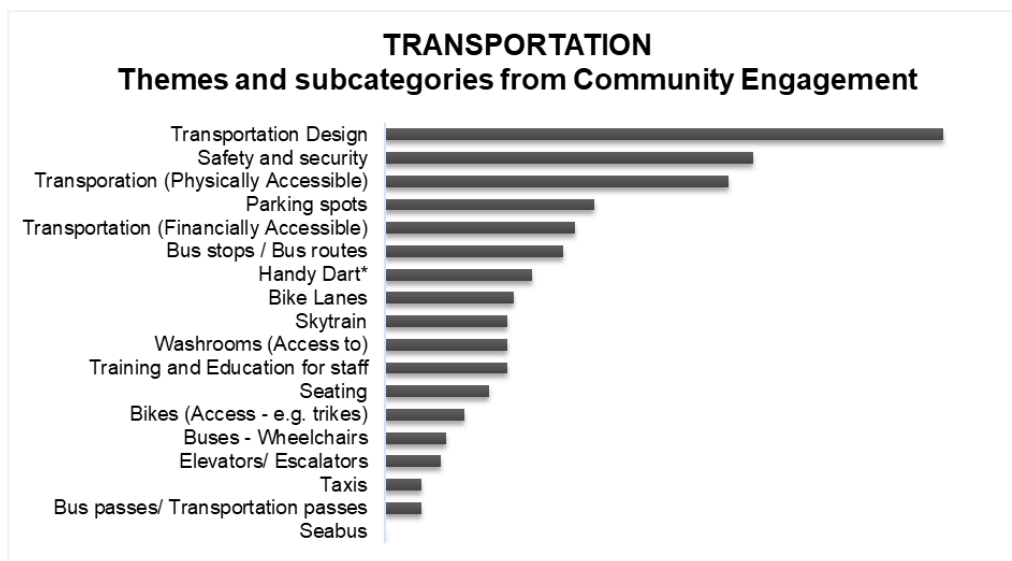
Transportation affordability and availability of options were also key themes discussed through the dialogue sessions. High transportation costs for transit fares and taxis and struggles with the availability of HandyDART continue to create additional barriers for persons with disabilities to move freely in the city.

“The areas that need the most improvement are the curbs, ramps, another elevators, including those at sky train stations. The newer ones are nice, the buttons are usually reachable and not that difficult to press...It would be nice if the city would assess the ramp situation throughout the city, especially in areas like ours. Our building is populated with individuals with disabilities, mostly wheelchair users that frequently use the area. I would like to emphasize the importance of ramps and curbs being smooth. Navigating those uneven and broken on the way to the sky train station and back, puts a lot of wear and tear on our wheelchairs, that’s one reason why I don’t go out as much as I would. It’s just not good for my chair or me to hit those bumps repeatedly.”

- Dialogue Participant

“People have to remember the association between disability and poverty. There are so many things that you take for granted like the bus fare. It’s very expensive for most disabled people.”

- Dialogue Participant



**Community Priorities:**

- To mandate universal design principles to guide transportation planning and design.



- To review wayfinding standards through an accessibility and intersectional lens.
- To ensure persons with disabilities are able to walk or use mobility devices safely in the pedestrian environment.
- To conduct a safety and security audit of transit spaces using an intersectional lens to identify

### Task Force Commentary

*The Task Force noted that in addition to the transportation priorities outlined in this focus area, the City needs to work on additional areas including: reviewing all aspects of transportation costs in relation to the impacts to persons with disabilities, ensuring accessibility of electric vehicle charging stations, exploring qualification criteria to provide access to alternative transit services and accessibility of parking meters. Special attention needs to be given to the following projects*

- HandyDart overview
- Broadway Extension line bathrooms and Elevators
- User Directed Transportation Systems Stats, Updates & Accessible Fee
- Driver Training update
- Outdoor Patios impact on transport
- mobility pricing in downtown
- reviewing the green city initiatives
- accessible parking spots
- signage
- HandyDart Registration updates, engagement & overview
- HandyDart Compass training & feedback
- bus stop balancing initiative
- increasing bus shelters
- washrooms and dual elevators throughout the transportation network
- seating on city streets
- electrical scooter, making sure they remain safe
- drop off zones
- Arbutus Greenway including bathrooms

improvements that meet updated accessibility standards.

- To leverage City functions to raise awareness and provide expert advice to individuals involved in the transit system, ride hailing system, or anyone providing mobility supports to persons with disabilities.
- To ensure that persons with disabilities who are driving or being driven, are able to park and load safely and within close proximity to their destination.

## 3. HOUSING POLICIES, PROGRAMS & DESIGN

**GOAL: The City of Vancouver continues to work to create accessible, affordable, market and non-market housing for persons with disabilities.**

Access to safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing contributes to people's health and well-being. Having the agency to choose and have control of living spaces is an important aspect of independence. Accessible housing is critical in providing independence for persons with disabilities. Accessible housing is affordable,

welcoming, and has the physical infrastructure for persons with disabilities. Having accessible housing in every neighbourhood, supports the diversity, sustainability, and a sense of permanence, allowing persons with disabilities to connect to resources, services and amenities and to become more involved in their city.

Accessible housing impacts people across the housing continuum, from residents experiencing homelessness and living in shelters up to market rental and ownership housing. However, some residents are disproportionately impacted by a lack of affordable and accessible housing.

The City of Vancouver is taking steps to improve housing affordability and accessibility. A key goal in the *Housing Vancouver Strategy* is to increase housing affordability by providing more purpose-built rental and social and supportive housing. The Strategy also contains directions that improve accessibility by ensuring new housing types incorporate design principles that meet the needs of Vancouver's diverse households, including those with mobility challenges and disabilities, and other populations with specific accessibility needs. The provision of affordable housing for all is a challenging issue within the City, and one that requires partnerships with the community housing sector and Provincial and Federal government partners. Affordable housing is even more pressing for people with disabilities. Intersecting identities such as race and gender compounds the challenges. The City continues to implement programs and projects to address homelessness and strives to understand and respond to the complex drivers that result in people being at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

"Having appropriate housing as being a core need, and by that, I am talking about mixed income and mixed diversity housing. Housing that has care to food security as well."

- Dialogue Participant

"People need housing - people opt out of going into shelters or opt out of going into the hospital or applying for supports because they don't feel comfortable there. They don't feel like there is a place for them there. They don't feel safe"

- Dialogue Participant

"People that are living in housing units, house units that are supported by the city but there aren't really sufficient community services built in to those housing or necessarily social processes that could support communication input, both to their living their quality of the living space that they are in or in contributing to the city."

- Dialogue Participant

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*What we heard from the community and other partners:*

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The City received a clear message that housing continues to be a struggle for persons with disabilities. Overall, there is an insufficient supply of buildings and homes designed to meet accessibility needs. Dialogue participants highlighted that the City can do more to encourage developers to support the creation of accessible homes, including low-income housing. As well, they shared that, given the limited supply of accessible housing, the waitlists are long while the need continues to increase.

Housing affordability was identified as being particularly challenging for persons with disabilities living on social assistance. A significant portion of a person's income goes towards housing costs, which creates a lot of stress as it leaves very little budget to meet other needs. Dialogue participants also noted that shelters are typically located in buildings that are not accessible and thus may present barriers for persons with disabilities needing to access emergency shelters.

Persons with disabilities define homelessness as "the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect means and ability of acquiring it."<sup>27</sup> Aside from street homelessness, there are other examples of homelessness for persons with disabilities, such as:

- Persons using a mobility device living in an inaccessible home

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<sup>27</sup> Canadian Definition of Homelessness: <https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/canadian-definition-homelessness>

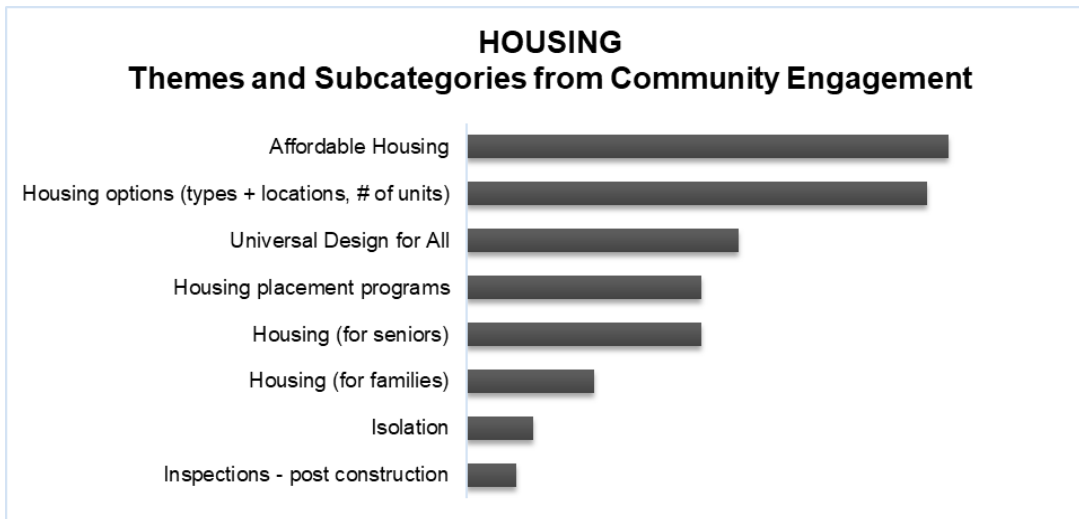


- Persons dwelling in a living room and not being able to access the bathroom and/or shower
- Persons not able to use the kitchen because it is not accessible
- Persons having to crawl on the floor through narrow corridors to access the toilet

The absence of support for persons with disabilities living in market rental housing can result in further limitations in their ability to lead fulfilling, healthy lives. Staff heard that housing can be jeopardized when a presenting disability or mental health concern results in things like a renter forgetting to pay rent, hoarding, or failing to take medication. Without advocacy or support, renters with disabilities can be at risk of losing their housing through eviction processes. Other supports and resources are required such as food, emotional and mental health supports, and other community services, work, or volunteer experiences for them to participate more broadly in community.

Dialogue participants shared that some of the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels do not have elevators or appropriate lighting. Some participants reported that they are often assigned rooms on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> floors even though they have physical disabilities.

Staff heard that access to housing for persons with disabilities is an important aspect of social inclusion as it has a direct impact on a sense of belonging.



#### Community Priorities:

- To mandate universal design principles to guide housing design, policy and planning in the City.
- To encourage the City to build stronger relationships with organizations to provide supportive housing programs and services for persons with disabilities, similar to the Right Fit Program.<sup>28</sup>
- To build partnerships and work with the disability community to advocate for increases in income assistance levels for shelter, and to advocate with the Province and Federal governments for more rental supplements for persons with disabilities.
- To work with the disability community on developing and standardizing criteria to prioritize access to accessible units and public housing for those in greatest need.
- To work with profit and non-profit developers to ensure that accessibility is built in to all housing developments

<sup>28</sup> Right Fit Program is a multi-partner service designed to address the crisis in wheelchair accessible housing by matching affordable, accessible homes and independent living supports with people who need them in the Vancouver region of British Columbia.

- To advocate for potential financial opportunities, such as the SAFER<sup>29</sup> program to support adaptations to make existing homes more accessible so people can stay in their homes
- To improve the accessibility of emergency shelters and provide more temporary transitional housing options for persons with disabilities who are searching for permanent homes.

### **Task Force Commentary**

*Housing accessibility has been a key priority for the work of PDAC and SAC over the years. The committees have provided input and put forward accessibility motions on areas such as: accessible path of travel, elevators, accessible bathrooms on the main floor, priority access for permits, laneway houses, increasing accessible housing stock etc.*

*There are significant barriers that still need to be addressed in order to ensure there are accessible housing options for persons with disabilities:*

- *One-bedroom apartments in Vancouver are constructed small and in many instances, there is no space to maneuver a wheelchair in the room, or have a caregiver perform personal care routines around a bed. Similarly, hospital size beds or assistive equipment for persons with disabilities may not fit in these units.*
- *More rental supplements are required to help persons with disabilities meet Vancouver's high market value rent.*
- *Below market rent is still not affordable by persons with disabilities*

### **The Task Force calls on the City to take actions on the following priorities:**

- *Encourage the provincial and federal government to come up with more rental supplements.*
- *Require applicants (developers) for multi-family developments to involve an accessibility consultant on projects to review accessible dwelling units for livability and best practice as well as exterior conditions and public realm to ensure equitable access for all.*
- *Streamline permit application process for persons pursuing accessibility related modifications, renovations or residential construction projects on a smaller scale (beyond developers). Provide staff review with persons familiar with accessibility-related issues.*
- *Maintain permanent accessibility review panel members on urban design panel.*
- *Take further action to make an exterior accessible path mandatory for one entrance to most newly built dwellings.*
- *Increase percentage of required accessible units in new apartment and condominium buildings.*
- *Maintain inventory of accessible suites: both what is newly coming online and older housing stock.*
- *Involve PDAC in development and adjustment of any and all accessibility related by-laws, policies and guidelines*
- *Hold a series of workshops with non-profit housing providers including First Nations, community organizations, BC Housing, labour organizations, corporate, federal and provincial partners to develop and fast-track a non-market housing strategy to better meet the continuum of needs for people with disabilities*
- *Create a timeline with measurable objectives arising from a community-based planning process with funders to actualize a non-market housing strategy with specific targets for vulnerable populations. It is important to note that intersectionality does not mean not having specific targets for vulnerable populations, rather it is to clearly address the need for inclusivity and diversity across and within different populations*

<sup>29</sup> Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for eligible BC residents who are age 60 or over

## 4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES

**GOAL: The City of Vancouver provides accessible information to connect and engage with persons with disabilities by providing communication supports, accessible websites, formats and digital content.**

Information and communication includes the conversations we have with each other, the information and material that we read, the technology we use, and the directional signs we follow to navigate around the city. Persons with disabilities encounter significant barriers that impact their ability to receive information about City policies and programs, or to provide input into City decision-making.

Accessible communication ensures that information is presented in multiple formats that consider the multidimensional aspects of disabilities, such as physical, mental, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related impairments.

Through communication and engagement strategies, the City of Vancouver is working to ensure that communications are effective, inclusive, non-disparaging, and free of technical jargon.

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*What we heard from the community and other partners:*

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Staff heard the importance of displaying materials in multiple formats and languages so that people are able to access information more effectively. Community advocated for the increased usage of videos, images, audio, and plain language versions of materials. Dialogue participants mentioned experiencing information overload when presented with some City communication. Simplified formats should be encouraged.

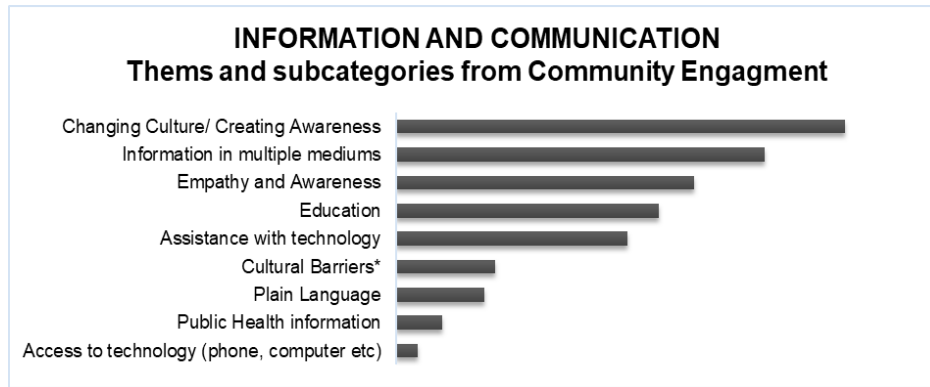
While communication and information sharing is a challenge for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, dialogue participants shared that advancements in technology have helped them to participate in the broader community. Software applications facilitate and increase information and communication exchange. It was noted, however, that technology is not being used as often as it could be for real time translation, interpretation or connecting with friends or family. Participants also mentioned that having available mini white dry-erase boards is a simple but effective tool for front-line staff to use to increase two-way communication.

"I wish that others would get on board, through public media, get those good stories out there, that's where the roots lie, is that empathy, we all have mirror neurons in the base of our head and that when we hear a story it sparks these neurons, it's like: I see you, I see me and you, you see me, we connect with each other that way".

- Dialogue Participant

"I think simple language is important. I find that some of the information that even comes out of the City is really complicated. Some of the families I work with that don't speak English; there are lots of reasons why people wouldn't be able to understand that language. So really using simple language is just a good start."

- Dialogue Participant



**Community Priorities:**

- To use City information, communication and engagement tools to create awareness about disabilities, reducing attitudinal barriers, and the importance of accessibility and accessible principles and practices.
- To offer resources to support organizations to make their meetings or events accessible to all people.
- To provide information in multiple accessible versions (for example, highly contrasted documents, or large print) and languages both in digital and offline formats.
- To provide in-person information sharing and communication support for persons with disabilities that engage with the City.
- To create awareness campaigns broadly across the City on the accessibility-related experiences and challenges faced by persons with disabilities and other equity-denied groups.
- To develop and mandate accessible communication standards across City groups for information and communication materials.

**5. EMPLOYMENT**

**GOAL: The City of Vancouver increases opportunities for persons with disabilities to contribute to the workforce and commits to supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace for all.**

Employment is a key focus area of the strategy, and encompasses recruitment, accommodation, retention, training and promotion of employees with disabilities. Benefits of accessible employment practices for the workplace include increased attraction and retention, better attendance, lower turnover, enhanced work quality and innovation in the workplace. For persons with disabilities, being valued participants and contributors to the workplace is an important aspect of their identity and allows for financial security, a sense of independence and improved mental health and well-being.

The City of Vancouver is committed to working towards an environment that is accessible, diverse, and inclusive for all employees. The Human Resources (HR) department provides support to the organization and City staff across all business units in areas such as recruitment, talent development, employee and labour relations, compensation, benefits, and health and safety. HR continues to look for ways to improve the City's ability to attract and retain employees, focusing on process optimization and technology improvements as well as supporting employee development and performance. Over the past few years, the issue of equity, diversity, and inclusion has been the central focus of the strategic plan within human resources. HR continues to work towards embedding accessibility and inclusivity across their policies, practices and processes.

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*What we heard from the community and other partners:*

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Throughout the community engagement process, many people voiced that they struggle to find employment opportunities and that the traditional day with a 9-5 schedule does not work for them. Dialogue participants noted that there is a lot stigma associated with hiring persons with disabilities and that there is a perception that accessible employment practices are a burden to companies and workplaces.

Dialogue participants also reflected on the need to have more programs that encourage organizations to employ persons with disabilities including affirmative action initiatives, incentives for companies to hire more inclusively, and programs that provide guidance and support for people with disabilities in the workplace. Equally important, staff heard that there need to be opportunities where people with disabilities can be promoted into leadership positions by removing barriers that prevent people with diverse abilities to grow within their career path. Other suggestions included flexible work arrangements that consider a wide range of physical, mental health, cognitive, communications, intellectual, sensory or age-related impairments.

A key message throughout the community engagement was that inclusion is a process. Fostering a culture of equity and accessibility within the workplace through training, education and awareness for all employees is fundamental to challenge ableism in the City. Staff heard that this education and awareness needs to start from the top down and it needs to encourage everyone to challenge ableist attitudes and practices that are engrained in the system. Most importantly, persons with disabilities want to be able to see that adoption of this strategy leads to the development of concrete policies, processes and tools for inclusive workplaces through the application of an accessibility lens.

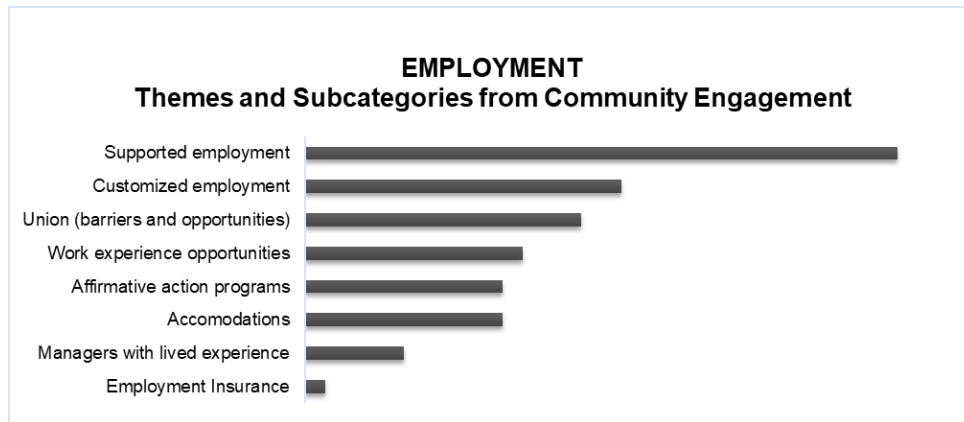
"Be able to participate is a little more, I have a lot of qualifications and a lot to offer. I can't do full time work. In federal government jobs they talk about quality of life and work life balance, but it doesn't happen because people need all the money to live. A lot of people working in the government are really over stressed. Be more open minded about shifts, why do we have to do everything from 9 to 5 in English and according to Robert's rules? There are so many other ways to do things and to be more sensitive with others."

- Dialogue Participant

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Acceptance is very important and even training of staff because if you've never been exposed to a disability, you don't know they can be invisible and you don't know how to behave around someone who may have a real problem accessing your services. So I guess it's also the concept of understanding what reasonable accommodation looks like in the workplace, but what a fair accommodation would look like and also how you adapt that for different work environments."

- Dialogue Participant



### Task Force Commentary

*Employment priorities for the City of Vancouver must recognize the 1 in 5 ratio of persons with disabilities living in Vancouver and hire staff with disabilities proportionally to ensure appropriate representation in the workforce. Additionally the Task Force wants the City of Vancouver to consider best practices on inclusive employment for persons with disabilities from across Canada*

### Community Priorities:

- To address staff knowledge and understanding of accessibility issues within the workplace through regular equity focused staff training.
- To evaluate the City's recruitment processes to ensure they are accessible and inclusive so that applicants with disabilities can access employment opportunities at the City. Consider alternative hiring practices.
- To review and refine the City's accommodation framework so that people with a wide range of disabilities are considered for employment and feel supported to do their duties successfully.
- To include mentorship or internship programs as effective interventions for retention.
- To ensure that all staff in hiring and in supervisory positions have strong knowledge of workplace accommodations and access needs so that they can provide support to employees with disabilities.
- To identify opportunities for improvement in the City's retention and leadership development processes for employees with disabilities.

## 6. GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT



**GOAL: Reduce barriers to participation in civic life using an equity-focused approach and provide equitable access to municipal programs and services.**

Engaging persons with disabilities from the outset and on a continuous basis ensures that their voices have an influence on the priorities and strategies of the City, actualizing the “nothing about us, without us” principle. Governance and Engagement focuses on reducing barriers to participation, promoting a coordinated service delivery approach across City units, and ensuring accountability around accessibility efforts. Public involvement is a vital part of the democratic process and the City of Vancouver is looking at ways to deepen local democratic engagement and reduce barriers to participation in local government programs, services, information, by-laws, and public decision-making. Voting accessibility during the electoral process is a key aspect for this focus area, ensuring that the accommodations for persons with disabilities are at the forefront of planning, coordinating and implementing the municipal elections.

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*What we heard from the community and other partners:*

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Access and inclusion in decision-making processes was a key priority identified through the community engagement. However, physical access barriers and lack of information and knowledge about City processes prevent some persons with disabilities from engaging with the City more meaningfully. Community engagement participants emphasized that, even when there are accessibility related programs available, efforts may not reach those who need the services and community has a hard time navigating and identifying supports and resources. As a result, individuals bear the responsibility to seek, advocate for, identify and request accessibility accommodations that may not be timely or adequate. Given the fragmentation of supports across the city, some participants suggested centralizing resources and having staff knowledgeable about accessibility matters available for community support.

Coordination of accessibility policies and programs is required so that there are consistent supports when engaging with the library, the park board, school board, police and emergency services. Recommendations were also made in regards to the use of the City’s functions and influence to promote accessible practices with other levels of governments, the non-profit sector, businesses and the private sector.

Participants pointed out that accessibility training on visible and invisible disabilities needs to be mandatory for City staff interacting with the public on an ongoing basis. Any training or resources must be co-developed and delivered with persons with disabilities in order to create greater awareness and inclusion.

Monitoring and accountability was another topic discussed in dialogue sessions. Community brought up the importance of tracking and prioritizing the requests made by people with disabilities when contacting the City, and making sure that appropriate follow-through takes place. This includes requests for information about planning and policy processes, permits, licensing and enforcement of by-laws.

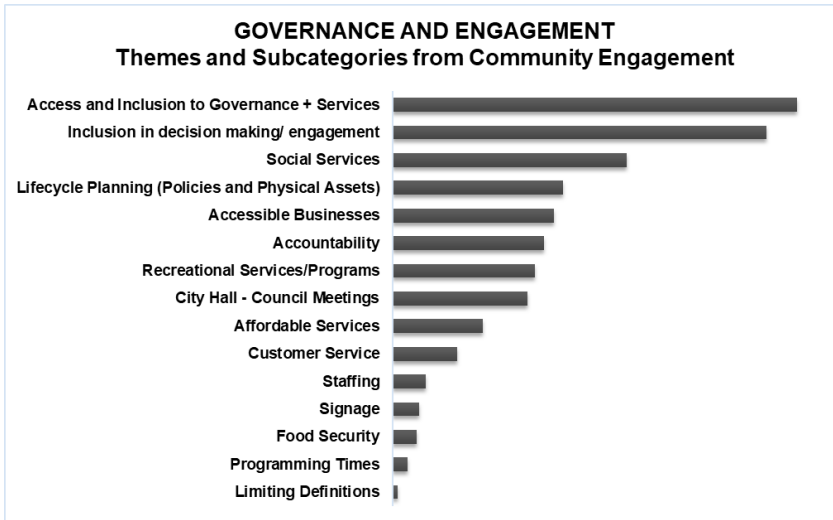
“For the City of Vancouver, it would be really great to have, a centralized hub where individuals can go to figure out what they need to do in order to get certain accessibility services. For example, we have a number of clients that call us saying there is no accessibility parking near where they live. They have tried talking with the City, but the City says you have to pay money to get that turned into an accessible parking spot. It's just not available for them. Then they have to contact the parking department of the City. As a person with a disability, that's not necessarily the easiest option for them, because they have to remember all these phone numbers. It would be really great to have a centralized hub.”

- Dialogue Participant

I recently moved here and I was trying to get my dog a licence. I couldn't find that information anywhere. I was hunting, and there was so much information, it wasn't very clear, it wasn't categorized. It wasn't very easy to read. It wasn't really friendly for someone who only has basic English. It was very confusing to search for and it was almost very distracting to find all that information in one place. I went in person when it was open and they were really friendly and it was great and they wrote back and forth. I was able to get two dog tags. I was told that I should have booked an interpreter.”

- Dialogue Participant





**Community Priorities:**

- To ensure that people with a diverse range of experience and different types of disabilities are involved in the development of standards to embed accessibility in the City.
- To develop customer services standards training for staff that includes:
  - how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
  - how to use equipment or devices available at the City or otherwise provided by the City to help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability;
  - to assist a person with a particular type of disability who may be having difficulty in accessing goods, services or facilities;
  - how to communicate with a customer with limited English or complex communication needs; and
  - appropriate and inclusive language to use with non-binary clientele.
- To create and disseminate civic engagement tools applying an intersectional accessibility lens.
- Raise public awareness about accessible services in the City of Vancouver.
- Incorporate accessibility criteria and features when acquiring or purchasing goods, services or facilities.
- Coordinate accessibility policies across city services and Civic Boards including the Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, Vancouver School Board.

**7. CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION**

***Goal: Together with non-profit organizations and persons with disabilities, build capacity and awareness to increase collaboration in the sector and address accessibility challenges in the community.***

Fostering awareness and change throughout the systems that persons with disabilities navigate regularly requires collaboration with community partners and non-profit organizations. The non-profit sector and community groups are instrumental in supporting and promoting the participation of persons with disabilities in City processes. It is through this engagement that capacity is built, awareness is increased and policies are strengthened to better reflect the experiences and voices of community.

Community organizations need to be properly resourced and supported to work collaboratively and to ensure that the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, seniors and those who experience mental health or substance use related disabilities are reflected in their policies, program development and service delivery. During the COVID-19 pandemic the non-profit sector has been playing a key role in responding to immediate community needs, mobilizing resources and adapting approaches to service delivery in order to meet the needs of equity-denied communities, including persons with disabilities.

The City of Vancouver supports non-profit organizations through grants, capital projects, rent subsidies and capacity support for arts and culture, sustainability and community-serving organizations.

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*What we heard from the community and other partners:*

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The community engagement process and discussions with representatives from community organizations highlighted the importance of collaboration across sectors and network building to further accessibility goals in the city. Communities emphasized the need to engage across disciplines and industries through action-oriented partnerships that can get to the core of the multifaceted issues that need to be addressed to make Vancouver more accessible for all.

Throughout the engagement process, staff consistently heard of the importance of incorporating intersectional perspectives in engagement processes and of the need to include the diverse voices of those living with disabilities in the decisions that affect them. Non-profit organizations were identified as key resources and partners that can elevate the voices of those who experience systemic discrimination, while at the same time supporting and addressing the complex needs of persons living with disabilities. Adequately funding these organizations to achieve their mandates and build their capacity to collaborate are required to create a citywide cultural transformation around accessibility. Through the formation of networks, these organizations in partnership with community can more effectively advocate for the large-scale changes and innovation that are needed to create an inclusive city.

Engagement participants also reflected on the important role of volunteer opportunities in helping shape programs and services, promote social inclusion and develop a greater sense of self-efficacy for participants. Recommendations for City and community-based initiatives include mentorship programs and volunteer opportunities for persons with disabilities.

"More community supports, for example mentorship programs. Intergenerational stuff is key because we are losing our disabled wisdom and knowledge to mentors that are lost too soon. We need that stuff right away so we can build up community capacity. Invest in autistic and disabled groups and programs in general. Including ones that are not registered as non-profits because I do not want to deal with that bureaucracy, the white supremacist and colonial system to get funding."

- Dialogue Participant

"Accessibility has a lot to do with having the opportunity to participate as well as the opportunity to develop a sense of agency about how an individual participates. And so one of the things that I have heard over the last four years in terms of some barriers is not only navigating the system within the disability community but beyond, and part of that individual journey and navigating where the service -- and how to create a support outside of the disability community."

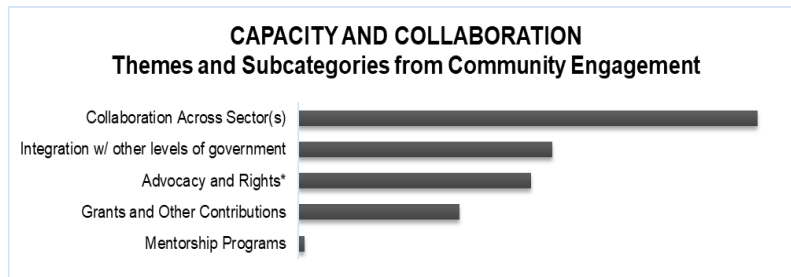
- Dialogue Participant

"It's important that you consult with other organizations and people with a large variety of disabilities throughout the entire process so as not to miss anything crucial. The main thing is the funding needed to ensure organizations can follow through."

- Survey Participant

Community Priorities

- Provide core funding to organizations working with persons with disabilities, seniors and those with lived experience of mental health challenges and / or substance use-related disabilities.
- Fund networks that bring together community groups and persons with disabilities to engage in collaborative planning and coordination of services among organizations that provide services to seniors and people with disabilities, including those who experience mental health and substance use-related disabilities.
- Integrate the leadership and participation of the disability community and collaborate with partners and stakeholders to ensure that accessibility and the rights and needs of persons with disabilities are central to policy and program development and delivery.
- Promote accessibility standards among community groups.
- Support volunteer and mentorship programs within the City and community organizations.
- Work together with the non-profit sector to advocate for the rights of people living with disabilities including seniors and people with lived experience of mental health and substance use-related disabilities.



**8. ADVOCACY AND WORKING WITH OTHER ORDERS OF GOVERNMENT ALONG WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

**GOAL:** *Work in integrated and collaborative ways with all other orders of government so that persons with disabilities are able to move, lead, participate, and contribute in their communities.*

With the recent passing of national and provincial legislation, accessibility is a priority for all levels of government. Fostering inclusion and addressing barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities require governments to work across jurisdictions and in partnership with the disability community to identify and implement solutions.

Many of the pressing issues identified by community – e.g., housing, infrastructure, social assistance, education, health and transportation - require joint responses by the Province, the federal government, partner public institutions such as Vancouver Coastal Health, TransLink, Vancouver School Board, UBCM and BC Housing, and other municipalities. The City also needs to work closely with Civic boards such as the Vancouver Police Department, the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and the Vancouver Public Library.

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*What we heard from the community and other partners:*

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At the dialogue sessions, many people shared their first-hand experiences when using the transit system, accessing the education system, or attending medical appointments. Participants provided insights into the daily challenges that they face when navigating systems that are not responsive to their needs, and in many cases, create barriers to inclusion. Participants called for the City to support change-making efforts by using its influence and connection to community to advocate for policy change. Some of the areas identified that are outside of the City’s jurisdiction that the City could play an important advocacy role toward include: HandyDART operations; accessibility at schools; appropriate daycare or child-minding spaces for children with disabilities; Persons With Disability (PWD) shelter portion of support allowance; funding for the development of social housing; employment conditions; social and financial assistance; and, accessibility standards in the built environment.

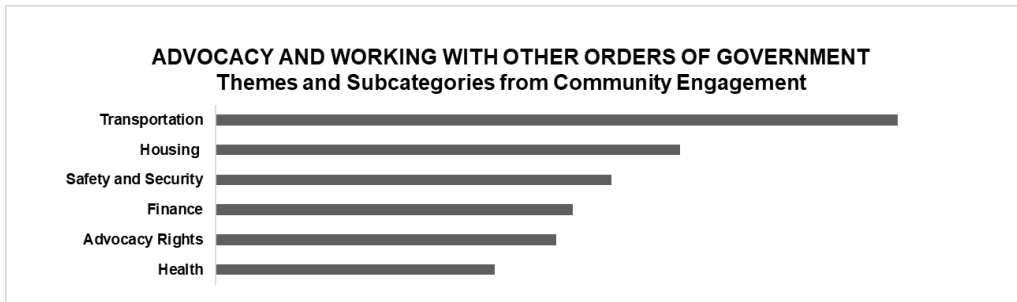
“It’s important to build a culture where individuals with disabilities and families of people with disabilities don’t necessarily always have to be the ones advocating for themselves or defending themselves.”  
 - Dialogue Participant

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“Representation from the City of Vancouver and other cities within Metro Vancouver on the Translink Board would open the door for more local initiatives to increase accessibility and affordability of transit for our communities, which would make it easier to meet our climate goals.”  
 - Meeting Minutes

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“I can only imagine how difficult it must be accessing health services; just going to the pharmacy, going to the doctor’s office or going to the hospital. There definitely needs to be more awareness and more interveners.”  
 - Dialogue Participant



**Community Priorities:**

- To build a culture where everybody has a role to play in advocating for increased accessibility and inclusion.
- To share community engagement recommendations with the other levels of government and partner affiliations.

- To work alongside persons with disabilities and the community on advocacy efforts with the federal, provincial, and regional governments.

## Accountability Framework

In order to monitor, evaluate, and communicate progress in the focus areas identified in this strategy, the accountability framework:

- a) Outlines guiding principles for the Accountability Framework;
- b) Specifies a structure and process for implementation coordination, including developing the Accessibility Committee, information gathering, monitoring, and publicly reporting departmental efforts; and
- c) Clarifies timelines for implementation planning and reporting.

Importantly, a public accountability approach that includes ongoing monitoring, public input and an advisory committee, and annual reporting is also a requirement of the new Provincial legislation.

### a) Guiding Principles

The City recognizes that many of the City's previous accessibility commitments have not been adequately actioned nor resulted in improved outcomes for persons with disabilities. Guiding principles for the accountability framework will help avoid a repeat of past failures. Should Council adopt this Strategy, these guidelines will assist staff with implementation, within their respective spheres of influence and responsibility:

- **Transparency:** honest sharing of facts, information, and context needed to ensure informed and equitable decision-making.
- **Consistency:** regular, ongoing, frequent progress reports to the Accessibility Committee, augmented by publicly available annual reports.
- **Proactivity:** proactive identification of opportunities for interventions to support accessibility, including timely inclusion of resource needs within the annual budgeting process.
- **Responsibility:** a culture of learning and self-reflection and taking responsibility for errors or oversights.
- **Openness:** creating opportunities for expression and discussion of dissenting views, needs, concerns, and priorities.

### b) Structure for Implementation and Reporting

City staff will work with the Accessibility Committee to coordinate the monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of actions. The implementation of the actions in the strategy will be the responsibility of each department.

Staff Lead (ACCS): A dedicated Planner will work with the Accessibility Committee and Departmental Leads to develop and implement ongoing community engagement and prioritization process and develop and track a multi-year action plan. ACCS will also partner with the Equity Office to develop and implement public feedback mechanisms to measure the impact of the accessibility strategy and related actions.

Departmental Leads: Each department will designate staff to lead and coordinate relevant priority actions in the Accessibility Strategy. Staff representatives will liaise closely with the Equity Office and be responsible for completing departmental action plans, as well as tracking, monitoring, and reporting on actions through an annual progress report.

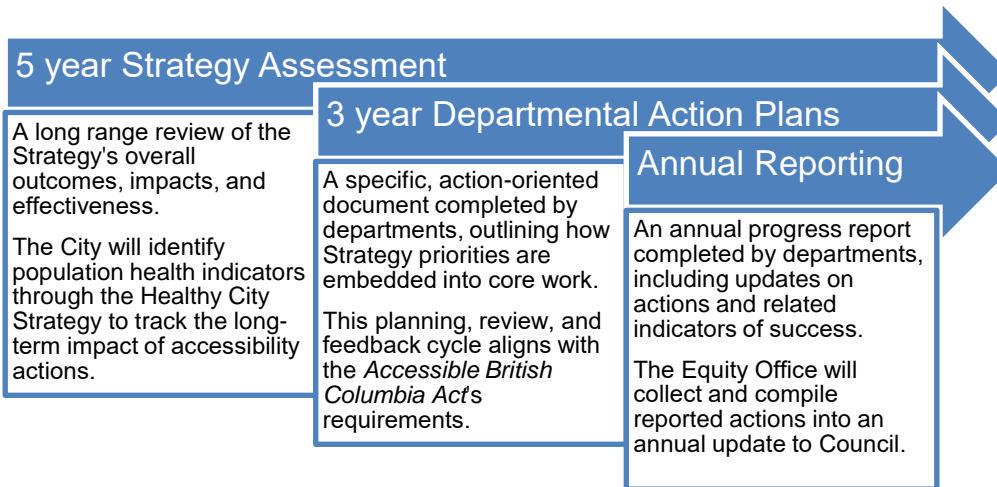
Accessibility Committee: As part of the obligations under Section 9 of the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, the City of Vancouver is required to establish an Accessibility Committee to: a) assist in identifying barriers to individuals in or interacting with the City; and, b) advise on how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the City. At least half of the members of the Committee must be persons with disabilities or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with

disabilities. It is expected that the Accessibility Committee will review annual progress reports and departmental action plans, provide comments on actions taken, identify progress gaps, and prioritize ongoing work. The Committee will also advise on the development of a public feedback mechanism for ongoing community dialogue and input into the Accessibility Strategy and provincial accessibility standards.

The nature and composition of the Accessibility Committee is yet to be determined. Options include a self-governing external committee, or a mixed model made up of both staff and community members. The Committee’s Terms of Reference – including voting procedures and processes related to conflicts of interest – will be co-created by the Committee members and will be presented to Council as part of Phase 2 deliverables.

### c) Planning and Review Timelines and Tools

The Accountability Framework includes three different timelines for tracking achievement and assessing impact:



**5 year Strategy Assessment:** A long range review of the Accessibility Strategy is needed in order to assess its overall implementation, impacts, outcomes, and effectiveness. To do this, well-being outcomes across social determinants of health will be assessed through the ongoing work of the Healthy City Strategy<sup>30</sup>. The City will track the long-term impact of accessibility actions by identifying relevant population health indicators and disaggregated data sets through the Healthy City Strategy.

**3 year Departmental Action Plans:** Departmental leads will be required to complete an action planning document every 3 years. This document is specific and action-oriented, and will ask departments to outline how Strategy priorities are embedded into their core work and objectives. This will include identifying key actions, key personnel, descriptions of work, timelines for implementation, and resource implications. The Accessibility Committee will review and provide feedback on the action plans. This planning cycle aligns with the *Accessible British Columbia Act* requirement that organizations review and update their plans at least once every 3 years. This will include the development of ongoing public feedback mechanism and support the alignment of actions with provincial accessibility standards.

**Annual Reporting:** Departmental leads will be required to complete progress reports each year, including reporting on the actions taken, their progress, and the related indicators of success. The Accessibility Committee will review and evaluate the progress reports, providing feedback, identifying progress gaps and re-prioritizing actions as needed. The Equity Office will also collect and compile the reported actions and public feedback into an annual update to Council.

<sup>30</sup> The Healthy City Strategy (HCS) is the City of Vancouver’s foundational social sustainability and equity policy which aims to promote equitable outcomes for equity-denied communities, including people living with disabilities. The HCS includes commitments to action across a breadth of goals relating to social determinants of health, including tracking population health indicators to monitor progress and understand health inequities across different population groups and neighbourhoods.

## SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

With *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: A City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy*, the City has an opportunity to create the conditions needed for promoting accessible environments by prioritizing the needs of people living with disabilities. The City can push for a cultural transformation through education and awareness that challenge ableist attitudes and practices.

Building an accessible City is a journey, and Phase 1 of the strategy represents an initial step. Phase 2 will include broader public engagement and the creation of a multi-year action plan. In addition, the City will begin to implement the accountability framework, evaluating and monitoring the departmental actions recorded in this document and establishing the Accessibility Committee and a public feedback mechanism as required by the *Accessible BC Act*.

*Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: A City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy* represents the evolution of our journey to creating a city where all people feel valued, respected, and openly welcomed.

"My hopes with this accessibility strategy is to see that just as the first step, it's a crucial step, but often times when we're thinking about disability rights or disability justice we're only assuming that accessibility is just one piece. But when I am talking about disability to policy people, particularly abled people, they think that accessibility is the end all, be all, and that's really not the case. The policy affect my life way more than any ramp will, for example, not being able to communicate to my peers because I don't have an accessible device when I can't use my mouth. That's much more pressing, but basically don't just stop at accessibility."

- Dialogue Participant



## APPENDIX 1 Organizations involved in Community Engagement

The 411 Seniors Centre  
Autism Community Training (ACT)  
Alzheimer's Association of British Columbia  
Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Agencies (AMSAA)  
BC Arthritis Association  
BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society  
BC Centre for Ability  
Blind Beginnings  
Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods  
Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)  
Canucks Autism Network  
Community Action Team  
Community Living BC  
Developmental Disabilities Association  
Disability Foundation  
Disability Alliance of BC  
Family Support Institute  
Health Initiative for Men (HIM)  
Inclusion BC  
Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC)  
MOSAIC  
Neil Squire Society  
PLAN Institute  
RainCity Housing and Support Society  
Rick Hansen Foundation  
Spinal Cord Injury BC  
Vancouver Coastal Health  
Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility  
West End Seniors Network

# Summary of the Community Engagement Report

This document is a summary of the community engagement results for the City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy, Phase 1.



*The City of Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skw̓x̌ wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples, who have lived on these lands since time immemorial.*

*As a City of Reconciliation, the City of Vancouver has committed to “form a sustained relationship of mutual respect and understanding with local First Nations and the urban Indigenous community.” This is an ongoing and evolving commitment, and one that is essential to our path forward.*



## THIS SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INCLUDES:

<b>A. Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B. Helpful Terms</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>C. Acknowledgements</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>D. Introduction</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>E. Community Engagement</b>	<b>11</b>
a) Meet and Greets	
b) Targeted Community Dialogue Sessions	
c) Shape Your City Survey	
d) Engagement Highlights	
I. Process for Dialogue Sessions/Survey	
II. How we collected information and how it was analyzed	
III. Engagement Successes and Challenges	
e) Who We Heard From	
<b>F. What We Heard</b>	<b>16</b>
a) Messages to Guide the Accessibility Strategy	
b) Areas of Focus/New Themes	
<b>G. Highlights from the Engagement Process</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>H. Next Steps</b>	<b>43</b>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Vancouver is making an Accessibility Strategy. This is a plan for the City to focus on accessibility.

Accessibility is needed for everyone to have a good life. Accessibility needs can be social, economic, cultural, spiritual, and political.

Anyone can experience disability. Temporary, periodic, or permanent changes in functioning at some point in life is a part of being human.

Accessibility is the practice of making a place usable by as many people as possible. Accessibility means taking away the barriers that stop people from participating in society. Accessibility is about inclusion.

- Accessibility means all people can:
- Access services and programs they need
- Get around in the city where they live and work
- Feel like they belong when spending time in public places

Accessibility needs are different for everyone. To better understand the views of persons with disabilities the City follows the value of “nothing about us without us”. The goals in making the City’s first Accessibility Strategy were to:

- Ask for and use suggestions from persons with disabilities
- Use accessible practices to create spaces for safe and honest conversations
- Make sure people not always included were invited to have their say

This report describes how staff met with community members to get feedback. It gives an overview of what was heard from the disability community. There are some messages that people felt were important for the City to pay attention to as the Accessibility Strategy is being made.

### ***The 7 main messages from the Community for the City of Vancouver include:***

#### ***1. Engage with People with Lived Experience Meaningfully***

- Include and listen to people with disabilities.
- Include people with many types of disabilities in decision-making activities.
- Support “nothing about us without us” by taking away barriers to participation.

#### ***2. Increase Public Education and Awareness to Counter Ableism***

- Teach others about ableism and how it affects everyone.
- Understand ableism is the false belief that people with disabilities are less valuable than other people.

Persons with disabilities refers to those who experience physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related impairments whether they are seniors, others with age-related impairments, or people

with lived experience of mental health concerns or substance use issues. For the purposes of this strategy, the City will use the term, persons with disabilities, which will reference the complexity

and diversity of lived experiences as outlined above and adopts a definition of disability that is broad and inclusive.

- Learn to know when people with disabilities may be experiencing not only ableism but also racism, sexism, or ageism.

### **3. Increase Understanding of the Full Spectrum of Disability across all City Departments and Related Boards**

- Grow staff knowledge about different types of disability.
- Understand disabilities can be permanent, temporary, invisible, or might change over time.
- Consider all types of disability in staff training, decision-making, and event planning activities.

### **4. Shift to an Accessibility Culture**

- Make sure accessibility is important and part of the way things get done.
- Only allow community and commercial projects if they are accessible and offer accessibility education to the community.
- Offer work opportunities for people with disabilities to be a part of the decision-making process

### **5. Apply an Accessibility Lens**

- Use an accessibility lens as a tool to help staff understand things from another view.
- Support the full inclusion and participation of all residents and employees.
- Find out what people need to take part in projects or events and remove the barriers.

### **6. Instill Universal Design Principles**

- The City should be made for everyone, not only people with typical abilities.
- Limit accommodation needs and challenges because of badly made systems and structures.
- Make places for all people to begin with and accommodations easy to get when needed.

### **7. Implement Accountability Mechanisms**

- Put in place ways to check the strategy is working.
- Understand the importance of the strategy and how it affects people.
- Get feedback and make the strategy useful for the people it is there to help

This report was the first step to getting a fuller picture of accessibility in the City. A more detailed study of what we heard is happening. It will include information from other sources such as reports from City Advisory Committees and conversations with City staff from all departments.

All of this will help make the draft Accessibility Strategy that will be presented to Council in Spring 2022. A larger community engagement process will then take place on the draft Accessibility Strategy to get more input from the Community about accessibility.



Picture Description: Three people are in this picture and they are in a circle facing each other working together. There are graphics on a flipchart that is in the centre of the circle. One of them uses a wheelchair and has a laptop on their lap. The other two people represents people of color, one of them is sitting down while the other one is standing up. Both of them has a laptop.

## HELPFUL TERMS

Here are some terms that are helpful to know for going over this summary of the report:

- **Accessibility Strategy** – The name of the City’s plan for making the City more accessible for all people
- **Built Environment** – The things around us made by humans for human activity.
- **Community Engagement** – A way of making sure community members feel that they are able to contribute meaningfully and participate fully.
- **Disability Community** – Includes persons with disabilities, their family members and supporters, and organizations serving people with disabilities.
- **Intersectionality** – The understanding that everyone has different experiences with oppression and we must consider all the things that can make people feel excluded such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and physical ability.
- **Meet and Greet** – A meeting held with a group to answer questions.
- **Persons with Disabilities** – People who experience physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related impairments.
- **Targeted Community Dialogue Sessions**
  - Having conversations with a set group of people to get answers to important questions.
- **Universal Design** – Building places and things for accessibility so they are usable by all types of people.

“Just having spaces to simply exist with other people. Hanging out with my friends or other people with disabilities, in a space where I don’t have to worry about anything, just hang out. Even a park would be a good option, but with the lack of benches or people in wheelchairs, it’s hard to get around. Just feeling like I’m a part of the community has been hard lately.”

- *Dialogue Participant*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is important for the City to understand the views of the disability community while making the Accessibility Strategy.

This report would not be possible without:

- The Accessibility Task Force
  - City of Vancouver survey respondents
  - City of Vancouver Dialogue Session participants
  - Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC
  - Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods
  - Community Living BC
  - Developmental Disabilities Association
-



- MOSAIC
- RainCity Housing and Support Society
- Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility

We would like to thank everyone involved for sharing your experiences. Our goal was to make the process meaningful, accessible, safe, and inclusive. We also thank those who supported language interpretation during our Dialogue Sessions. These supports make it possible for people to take part.



Picture Description: Seven people are together in a line. One of them uses a wheelchair, two people are pregnant, one is using a white cane, one has an arm prosthetic, one is has a lower limb prosthetic, and one is using one crutch. This picture shows the variety of disabilities between people. Some of them are using their phones to talk to each other, and another person is holding a clipboard.

## INTRODUCTION

The Accessibility Strategy will:

- Take place in phases.
- Identify and remove barriers.
- Promote equity and fairness for all residents, visitors and employees.
- Be part of all operational plans and all City departments.

“An accessible city to me is one where I am part of the rule and not the exception”

- Dialogue Participant

Phase 1 of the strategy includes:

- Getting feedback and making goals.
- Creating steps to achieve the strategy goals.
- Plan for future phases.

Providing support and guidance in making the draft Accessibility Strategy is:

- The Social Policy and Projects division of the Arts, Culture and Community Services department
  - The Accessibility Task Force (ATF)
  - The Internal Staff Working Group
  - The Vancouver Police Department
  - Vancouver Public Library
  - Parks, Recreation and Culture
-

The Accessibility Strategy will support the full community participation of persons with disabilities. The goal of the Accessibility Strategy is to build inclusive services, programs, and places.

The Phase 1 City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy will be presented to Council in Q1, 2022.

Phase 2 will include making the Accessibility Strategy.



Picture Description: this is a park scene where people are playing badminton, children are on swings, a child is on a merry-go-round play equipment, people are moving around, including an elderly person being pushed in a wheelchair by another elderly person. There are people sitting on a park bench, roller blading or sitting down having a picnic. This picture is showing a variety of people and the diversity that each of us bring to the community.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The City heard from people with disabilities to understand accessibility from lived experience. People gave suggestions to the City on how to improve accessibility and inclusion. And also how to make sure the Accessibility Strategy includes differences within the disability community.

To make sure community members could take part there were three methods used:

1. Meet and greets with organizations from the disability community
2. Targeted community dialogue sessions
3. An online survey

Number of Organizations that were involved in the Meets and Greets	27
On-Line Targeted Community Dialogues	15
Total Number of People that attended the On-Line Targeted Community Dialogues	119
Total Number of People that Completed the Survey through Shape Your City	89

### ***Organization Meet and Greet Sessions:***

- City staff met with 27 organizations representing persons with disabilities from January to April 2021.
- The organizations the City met with represented different disabilities and intersecting identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.
- The meet and greet sessions were a way to talk about the City's actions to increase accessibility and what the organizations' programs need to support people with disabilities.

### ***Targeted Community Dialogue Sessions:***

- The targeted community dialogue sessions were meant to be friendly conversations in safe places.
- They included topics such as the meaning of accessibility, accessibility barriers, and recommendations for the City.

### ***Shape Your City Survey:***

- The survey was given to people who were not able to attend a Dialogue Session.
- The survey was also sent to all of the meet and greet organizations to share with their members.

The table below shows the response the City has received from the community.

Three questions were asked at Dialogue Sessions and in the survey. The Accessibility Task Force and City staff made the survey questions all open-ended. Open-ended

questions meant people could share their opinions based on their experience and in their own words.

***The 3 questions asked were:***

1. When you hear the word accessibility, what does it mean to you? What does an accessible City look like?
2. What are the things that get in the way (barriers) of you or someone you know being able to take part in community life in Vancouver?
3. What would make it easier for you or someone you know to take part in and contribute to community life in Vancouver?

People were able to give any comments and suggestions to the City about making the Accessibility Strategy.

***How the Community Engagement Process Worked***

Here are the details of the Targeted Community Dialogue Sessions:

- Information about the Accessibility Strategy was given to people before coming to the Dialogue Sessions.
- They started 30 minutes early so people could get used to the technology and connect.
- Participants were able to bring a support person to the session as needed.
- Because of the pandemic all the community Dialogue Sessions took place online.
- Dialogue Sessions were hosted by trusted organizations and City staff.
- At the beginning of each session Staff welcomed everyone, acknowledged the land, and explained the meeting rules.
- Information about the Accessibility Strategy was given again before asking questions to participants.
- The host then asked the three open-ended questions and listened to answers from everyone.
- Everyone was thanked for joining the conversation and sharing their stories
- There were 15 sessions that took place through the months of April to November 2021.
- Each conversation had 12 people so there was space for everyone to speak and give lots of ideas.
- Each conversation was 2 hours long and people gave lots of feedback.

The following supports were included to make sure that everyone was able to take part:

- ASL and Closed Captioning for all sessions
  - Language interpreters
  - Written materials in plain language were shared with participants.
  - Meetings were co-hosted by community organizations and people the participants trust.
  - Hosts made sure that everyone had the chance to take part in the session.
  - Staff made reports and gave them to participants to review and make sure their ideas were included.
-

The Shape Your City Survey was an online survey open to City residents from July 1st to 31st, 2021. Survey participants gave ideas to the City about what is needed for making the Accessibility Strategy. The same open-ended questions were asked in the survey as in the Targeted Community Dialogue Sessions.

The online survey link was shared with City residents; it was:

- Given to people who wanted to attend the community Dialogue Sessions but couldn't make it.
- Emailed to organizations City staff met through our "meets and greets". They were asked to share the survey with all their members living in Vancouver.
- Posted on the City's website under the people and programs page with more information about the Accessibility Strategy.

### **Who We Heard From**

People who answered the survey and joined the Dialogue Sessions included:

1. **People with lived experience of a disability** – differing of age, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender identity.
2. **Family members and caregivers** – parents, guardians, siblings, and support workers of persons with disabilities.
3. **Organizations providing services** - staff or board members that work in the field of disability or other organizations delivering services to people.



Picture Description: There are seven people sitting around a boardroom table and one of them is standing up talking. One of the people uses a wheelchair. All of the people are using laptops and listening to the person who is standing up.

Types of Disabilities Reported	Participant Profiles
<p>Vision</p> <p>Deaf/ Hearing Impaired/ Deafblind</p> <p>Sensory</p> <p>Neurodiversity</p> <p>Mental Health Challenges</p> <p>Substance Use Disorders</p> <p>Cardiac and Respiratory Illnesses</p> <p>Cerebrovascular</p> <p>Autoimmune Diseases</p> <p>Hereditary Disorders</p> <p>Mobility Issues</p> <p>Neurological Disorders</p> <p>Chronic Pain/Illness</p> <p>Fatigue Syndrome</p> <p>Cognitive/ Intellectual/Developmental Spinal Cord Injuries / Degenerative MuscleDiseases</p>	<p>Individual Participants:</p> <p>Seniors, Elders or older adult</p> <p>Youth/Young Adults</p> <p>Family - Parents, Siblings</p> <p>Individuals born outside of Canada</p> <p>Indigenous Persons whose ancestors have lived on Turtle Island</p> <p>Racialized, Visible Minority, non-white, Black, Person of Colour or similar term</p> <p>Individuals who's first language is not English</p> <p>Refugees and Landed Immigrants</p> <p>Sex Workers</p> <p>LGBTQ/ 2S+persons – Queer</p> <p>Non-binary or gender fluid persons</p> <p>Persons who identify as Trans</p> <p>Individuals with lower incomes</p> <p>Service Providers:</p> <p>Executive Directors of Organizations</p> <p>Staff from organizations with a mandate to provide services to persons with disabilities</p> <p>Staff from organizations with a mandate to provide broad services to many people in community</p> <p>Support Workers</p> <p>Advocate(s) - Mental Health Community</p> <p>Advocates</p> <p>City Employees</p>



## WHAT WE HEARD

People shared stories about the challenges they experience such as physical, social, environmental, attitudinal, financial, communication, and information-related problems.

### **Community Responses According to Planned Areas of Focus and New Themes**

Before meeting with the community for Dialogue Sessions work was done by the Accessibility Task Force. The Task Force came up with 7 planned areas of focus for the draft Accessibility Strategy. The areas of focus that go along with the Accessible Canada Act and the new Accessible British Columbia Act. After getting information from the Dialogue Sessions and areas of focus are:

- Built Environment and Public Spaces
- Transportation Programs, Services and Policies

Housing the Shape My City Survey it was clear the planned areas of focus matter to people but some new themes also need to be a focus.

- The planned Programs, Policies, and Services
- Information and Communication

The new themes that came up after the meeting with the community are:

- Income/Financial
- Racialization/Discrimination
- Intersectionality
- Reducing stigma and Ableism through Awareness/Education/Training
- Rights/Advocacy
- Social Isolation/Inclusion
- Safety/Security
- Access to Education



Picture Description: This picture shows that there are many people moving around in all directions. Some of the people are using mobility aides such as canes, wheelchairs, or scooters. Some of the people are elderly, and some are young. This picture shows the diversity of the people and what we bring to the community.

## **The Following is a List of Answers We Heard from the Disability Community**

- These are people's answers to the questions about the meaning of accessibility and what an accessible city looks like:
  - Equal access for everyone; equity for everyone.
  - Being treated with dignity and respect.
  - Accessibility is about how you FEEL in a place.
  - Accessibility acknowledges loneliness and isolation.
  - Being able to get around the city and participate in all aspects of society without any barriers and without needing any type of accommodations.
  - Requires universal design as the starting point for all and recognizes that those that are not disabled may only be temporarily able-bodied.
  - Universal design ensures that we can all participate, in all aspects of our lives.
  - Independence and freedom.
  - Understand ableism first before using accessibility as a tool to address it.
  - The environment and its various elements in which we live, shop, socialize and work are accessible to all.
  - Accessibility for all: design should be inclusive design and not specific to only one disability as we have seen the City do for many, many years.
  - Accessibility moves beyond the physical barriers; it is a reduction of any attitudinal barriers that people experience on a daily basis and ensures equitable access to the SAME opportunities (not separate/different opportunities).
  - Being able to age comfortably and gracefully in the community I live in.
  - Having the same privileges as someone without a disability.
  - Doing what we need to do in a similar amount of time and effort as someone who doesn't have a disability.
  - Equal opportunities. Just being able to do -- well, I mean ultimately, when it comes down to it, people with disabilities sometimes can't do the same things. But at least give them that opportunity and give alternatives. It's just so important because people with disabilities, we shouldn't have to tone our lives down. We should be given a chance and have opportunities and alternatives available to us.
  - The right to be full participants in society and being part of the decisions that are being made.
  - Accessibility needs are anticipated so we don't feel like an afterthought.
  - Affordable.
  - Safety and security: welcoming, culturally safe spaces.
-

- Receiving a diagnosis and not much changing in your life.
- There is an understanding of the unique needs of the deaf and blind community.
- Accessibility means to me to have more opportunities for people with disabilities and provide more programs or work or job opportunities as well.

An Accessible City is an inclusive city – fosters a sense of belonging, social connectedness and an acceptance of diversity.

- Dialogue Participant

***These are people's answers to the questions about what gets in your way to contributing or participating in the City, and recommendations for the City to improve accessibility. The answers are listed under each one of the City's planned areas of focus in blue.***

## **Built Environment and Public Spaces**

Prevention and reduction of physical barriers related to: housing, transportation, public buildings, facilities and spaces and commercial and institutional spaces.

- Improvements in the built environment to retrofit and invest in infrastructure for intersections, city facilities, sidewalks and public spaces.
  - Plan properly; retrofitting is way more expensive.
  - Understanding persons with light sensitivities and planning accordingly. Energy efficient lighting can be very debilitating and impact access to services and programming.
  - Lack of accessibility requirements for private developers in construction.
  - More accessible housing units, office spaces, hotels, parks, playgrounds, green spaces and beaches
  - Stairs with no railings are unsafe.
  - More ramps that are strategically placed.
  - Consider incentivizing companies (for example, rebates) to prioritize accessibility for any existing or new facilities.
  - Complete accessibility audits of neighbourhoods.
  - Update the building code and adopt the principles of universal design.
  - Swimming pools should have roped off lanes for blind swimmers to avoid collisions.
  - Partner with Autism community and advocacy groups to design and build spaces and places within community that are sensory aware.
-

- Mandatory automatic door openers and accessible washrooms for new commercial buildings.
- New public spaces, such as patios, have not been required to be made accessible.

### **Places to rest and to relax**

- Not enough benches at bus stops and in parks.
- More water stations.
- Get rid of the anti-homelessness architecture

### **Elevators**

- Elevators - needs to be an accessible phone and means of communicating for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Make sure all elevator operations have a system for safety for someone with a disability.
- Use of braille on the buttons.

### **Washrooms**

- More accessible washrooms across the city (parks, transit, etc.).
- Need for adult change tables in washrooms.
- Public portables washrooms like in Tokyo, in the parks or even on the streets.
- Accessible gender-neutral washrooms.
- Doors too heavy, sinks, dryers, counters, dispensers in washrooms are too high

### **Sidewalks**

- In terms of mobility and sidewalks, there's no consistency of the sidewalks across the city. How does the "City assess and review what needs to be done?"
- Sidewalks are in need of repair – people are not going out in their wheelchair because it is physically hard on their body and it damages their expensive mobility devices.
- Clean the sidewalks during the winter.
- Better construction signage to warn people of sidewalk closures ahead.
- Flatten, repair buckled sidewalks immediately.

### ***Restaurants/businesses are not accessible for so many reasons:***

- The acoustics are so bad.
- Need menus with pictures, large print, braille options.
- High counters

### ***Accessible Path of Travel***

- Accessible pathways allow every one the opportunity to visit friends and neighbours and develop social connections and not live in isolation.

“So if you plan for the margins, you have to talk to them. In order to know what the heck anything means, they have to put it into their head. It's such a foreign concept to them, until it's the day they experience in disability, that's when they get their “a-hah” moment.”

- Dialogue Participant

- If you can't get into a building, you can't belong.
- Access to businesses - not only getting into the front door but also navigating the narrow aisles throughout the stores. Quite often people can't navigate once they get into the businesses.
- Not enough automatic door openers; they also need to be slower.

### **Crosswalks/Intersections**

- Lights are not long enough – put in a secondary button to extend the length of lights at the intersections.
- Consider vibration alarm systems at crosswalks; helpful for people who are blind or visually impaired.

### **Curb-Cuts**

- Not enough curb cuts and existing curb cuts are not being repaired.
- Curb cuts often do not align with curb cuts on the opposite side of the street and puts members of the public in increased danger.
- Paint the edges of curb cuts so low vision people can see them.
- Remove curb bulges (curb bulges are a traffic calming measure which narrow curbs at street intersections. Streets that are 10 metres wide typically have two bulges installed, one on each side of the street).

### **Signage:**

- It is important for everyone but particularly for people with profound hearing loss.
- Signs need to be lowered; easier for people who have a visual impairment and should be yellow and black.
  - Clearly marked and legible street names.
  - Remove curb bulges (curb bulges are a traffic calming measure which narrow curbs at street intersections. Streets that are 10 metres wide typically have two bulges installed, one on each side of the street).



Picture Description: There are nine people in this picture. There is one person using a wheelchair and being pushed by another person; and there is another person in a wheelchair as well. There are a couple of people using canes, one person pushing a baby stroller, and

one person with a prosthetic lower limb. There is another person sitting down carrying a sign saying “need help”. This picture shows the diversity of the people and what we bring to the community

## TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND POLICIES

Programs, services, and policies are in place, which prevent and remove barriers to accessing affordable, suitable and adequate private and public transportation.

- A more friendly and inclusive shuttle service around the City to get people from place to place –access to parks, green spaces, grocery shopping, medical facilities etc.
- Offer reliable public transportation that links all districts, allows for people with disabilities to move around how they need to, whether walking or wheelchairs, with good street lighting and paving on sidewalks.
- Develop applications where people can use audio and figure out the best routes to travel.
- Affordable and accessible transit. Enforceable rules against discrimination when accessing transportation which includes missing facilities, and refusal of services.
- All transportation companies need to provide accessible service (False Creek Ferries, HarbourAir).

### **HandyDart:**

- HandyDart restricts the time of day to travel the Lower Mainland thus impedes the programs and public events persons with disabilities can partake in. For example, wait times, hours of operation, booking system, pick-up zones, etc.
- Too much pre and post waiting times for HandyDart
- The training do not meet needs of persons with disabilities
- HandyDart should not have borders between municipalities

### **SkyTrain:**

- Not enough accessible and working elevators and escalators at SkyTrain stations.
- A SkyTrain without noise – other countries have high-tech bullet trains that are quiet.
- More priority seating for seniors and people with disabilities.
- There needs to be a visual accompaniment to the stops on buses and SkyTrains.
- Trains shutting down early on weekends is problematic

### **Buses:**

- Bus stops are being removed when they should be increased.
  - Bus driver attitudes and lack of understanding about needs of persons with disabilities.
  - Better signage and lighting in the bus loops.
  - There should be signage on all sides and angles of the bus.
  - Buses are only letting one wheelchair person on buses when there is room for two; supposedly due to social distancing.
  - Buses are poorly designed in that the seats supposedly allocated for seniors are very difficult to access and
-

stand up from.

- Free bus passes for persons with disabilities would be helpful. Not everyone who is disabled gets a bus pass.
- Seniors and persons with disabilities need more time to board and get off the trains and buses.
- Require more buses that go to parks and public spaces.
- Re-routing buses can be a huge barrier for those with disabilities.

**Taxis:**

- Not enough accessible taxis.
- Is there anything the City can do to regulate the number of available cabs?
- Cabs do not want to accommodate us; they don't want to pick us up.
- Uber adds a whole other layer to the transportation issue. Does anybody know how Uber is working or not for persons with disabilities?
- There is nothing stopping the City, which has other regulatory powers to require more taxis.
- Change the locations of taxi pick-up zones.

**Parking:**

- Not enough accessible parking spaces for vehicles and mobility aid/devices
- For people with a hearing impairment, consider installing subtitles on the audible parking metres as many people cannot hear the park by phone instructions.
- Free parking for persons who have a disability.
- Wider parking spots for vans with side entry or those in wheelchairs.

**Bicycles:**

- For Deafblind persons, there needs to be rules or policies for bike users and it needs to be enforced.
- The City has made so many concessions for bikes but it takes away from the freedoms of others.
- Put up cautionary signs for cyclists to yield to wheelchairs and people on mobility devices.
- Bike lanes on should have more stop signs.
- Consider licensing for bikes. Safety measures for pedestrians should come first.
- No accessible options for City of Vancouver's Mobi bike share program (i.e. tricycles).
- Widen the bike lanes.

There should be a range of housing options from supported housing to regular market rentals or to purchase that have basic accessibility built-in.

- Survey Participant



## HOUSING PROGRAMS, POLICIES AND SERVICES

Housing programs, services and policies are in place, which prevent and remove barriers to accessing affordable, suitable and adequate housing

- Not enough affordable, accessible housing especially for people in a wheelchair.
- Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units are not accessible; people with mobility issues are put in places with no elevator.
- Apartments are so small now that they don't consider disabilities.
- People who are living in housing units supported by the City that do not have sufficient community services built in to those housing units.
- The City relies on BC Housing's definition for accessible housing is 5%. And CMHC accessible housing is 10%. But the City goes for the lowest denominator in its housing strategy.
- People are paying more than 50% of their income on housing. Housing that costs should be less than 30+% of income.
- Housing for seniors requires a much higher level of accessible units which then means that the non-profits and co ops who are delivering those units need to have sufficient number of accessible units as well as the financial burden of increasing unit sizes as well.
- People who are homeless are not able to participate well in the City; seniors are the highest roaming demographic of people moving in shelters.
- New residences being built all over Vancouver, but those are for the wealthy. Doesn't Vancouver have a policy to have a percentage of people with disabilities or homeless people to live in these places as well?
- People should be able to age in place and stay in their own home instead of having to move into assisted living or long-term care.
- Would like to see the City to consider ways for property tax easements that would encourage people who are making legal income suites accessible. Many people who can't get low-income housing would happily live in a legal basement suite if it was accessible.
- Financial support in retrofitting homes when/if an individual's status of being able-bodied changes.

Picture Description: There is a person who uses a wheelchair getting into an accessible taxi cab. This person is using the ramp to get into the cab. The cab is a mini-van with the wheelchair symbol on its window



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Communication and information provided is accessible to all and demonstrates, exemplifies and embodies our municipal diversity and inclusion values.

- Lack of accessible communication strategies throughout the City including but not limited to wayfinding and building layouts.
- The pandemic has really highlighted the technological divide and the lack of access to information.
- People are lacking technology and the skills to use the technology:
- Provide a program that teaches basic computer skills.
- Many people may not have internet or a computer or never grew up with technology or lose capacity or do not have the financial means to access technology.
- So many people with a disability and seniors don't have access to computers or the internet. How do you access service when everything is on-line?
- We need universal public broadband.
- Accessibility is the implementation and design of both physical infrastructure and communication that accommodate persons with disabilities:
- Online forms are not accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. Only consider people with eyesight.
- The use of figurative language without explanation.
- Need for standardized communications for people who are blind, constructed to be used with text to speech software.
- Government funded translation and interpretation services, including ASL
- Lack of: multi-lingual services and translation/interpretation that is free; audio descriptions.
- Be knowledgeable about needs of the deaf and blind community and the specialized communication methods (tactile environments, use of interveners, etc.).

### **City Website:**

- There is not a webpage or section of the site which is specifically focused on pertinent information for people with disabilities and the senior's page has not been updated for sometime.
  - 3-1-1 and 2-1-1 should be advertised more prominently to ensure people are aware of them as ways to get more information and speak to someone directly.
  - Establish a group of people with adapted needs who can act as consultants for the website and look at proposed changes.
- Overall, there needs to be improvements in the use of assistive technology.
  - Language needs to be at a level where we all understand – plain language.
  - How can you participate or volunteer your time if you don't have access to the information or the skills to be able to access that information?
  - Make sure that information is readily available in multiple forms and is plain language.
-

- Accessing information through an easy telephone line and being able to talk to a real person.
- Have audio description available at significant cultural events such as parades and visual displays help bring out those with sight loss
- Have sign language interpreters at meetings, events and so forth.
- Have accessibility features within social media campaigns and social media platforms.
- Websites with software for people with vision/hearing impairments.
- The City could take advantage of TV channels that have side panels on their screens and provide information about services and programs.
- Language interpreters are needed; there are so many diverse cultures in Vancouver and many do not speak English.
- The use of masks for Deafblind persons is very challenging:
  - Transparent masks would be helpful.
  - Have a whiteboard available so things can be written down.
- If working with people who are Deafblind - black or yellow text is easier to see.
- Increased use of an FM (frequency modulation) system which is a wireless device that helps people hear better in noisy situations.
- Create a symbol (maybe an ear) that identifies establishments that provide accessible communication; similar to the wheelchair sign.
- Theatres have those closed captioning units that you can put into the cup holder; the City could do this at City sponsored events.
- Radio announcements and larger print signs for those with a visual impairment.
- The municipal government should be covering the cost of interpreters for people accessing services at City Hall.
- Phone systems such as video relay services are very frustrating and hard to navigate.

## EMPLOYMENT

Support the recruitment, accommodation, retention and promotion of employees with disabilities. Create a work environment that is accessible, diverse and inclusive.

- Equal access to employment with the City of Vancouver.
  - Volunteerism is a stepping stone to employment; increase opportunities for persons with disabilities to volunteer.
  - Hire people with disabilities in important roles. People with disabilities should be an integral part of the staff developing and implementing an accessibility plan.
  - The City should have explicit affirmative action programs that hire people with a wide range of disabilities.
  - Need for living wage, to reduce experiences with poverty and housing insecurity.
  - Strengths based approach to employment: “the ability to navigate services, demonstrate knowledge, and perform work in a manner that best reflects, and is responsive to, the individual’s strengths and needs”.
-

- Employers don't understand and do not make the effort to create an accessible work environment:
  - Staff don't always for comfortable or safe sharing information about their disability.
  - Managers don't understand that I can do the work but it may take me longer. My brain is wired differently.
- Need education, working experience and volunteerism to obtain employment.
- In general, there should be some kind of strategy or program that would allow people with disabilities and struggling looking for work to guide a career pathway in figuring out where we want to go in life. In general, there should be some kind of strategy or program that would allow people with disabilities and struggling looking for work to guide a career pathway in figuring out where we want to go in life.
- The rate of unemployment for people with disabilities is staggeringly high.
- Requiring a driver's license for employment is a barrier.
- What is the City doing to remove barriers so people with diverse abilities can apply for and pursue employment with the City and beyond?
  - Make the application and interview process more accessible.
  - How are staff being retained?
  - Are they able to progress in their career?
  - Employee accommodation process is unclear. What does reasonable accommodation look like? Has the City considered establishing an accommodation office?
  - Have more part-time positions.
  - Do a comprehensive audit.
  - Work with unions to remove barriers and promote customized and supported employment. Unions should be more supportive and encouraging employers to hire people with disabilities and encourage more flexibility. For example, 4 hour shifts can be a barrier to employment for many.
  - Has the City considered providing work experience opportunities to students who have a disability? We would welcome the opportunity to discuss work experience programs and how the City could participate. There are job coaches who support the students on site.
- What is the City doing to learn from other inclusive employers to ensure all people have equal opportunity? Is the City of Vancouver a member of the President's Club (a network of 25 change-driven BC business leaders who are champions for more accessible, inclusive workplaces)?
- Educate staff so they understand the different types of disabilities and the challenges people face

"Something that's in place in the beginning of a project or program and embedded from the very beginning rather than it's an afterthought. It becomes accommodation and that's not accessibility."

- Dialogue Participant

## GOVERNANCE AND SERVICES

Provide equitable access to municipal programs and services and increased engagement and participation opportunities in local government business and public life and public decision making.

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## ***Citizen Engagement***

- Nothing about us without us.
- There is a lot of skepticism within the disability community as to whether the City really does listen.
- Needs to be an openness and willingness; the people who make decisions need to be open-minded and flexible and really hear what people need.
- Citizen engagement has to be accessible which means accommodating the various abilities and diverse needs.
- Ongoing partnerships with people who have lived experience so the City can learn from and promote the leadership and voice of people with disabilities.
- The City needs to create more opportunities for people's voice to be heard right from the beginning.
- Take into account voices of people who are usually overlooked.
- If you plan for the margins, you have to talk to them. Marginalized voices within marginalized communities need to be represented.
- Create more ways to have our voices heard at City Council. It is an intimidating process.
- Involving us results in better decision, plans and projects and maximizes the benefits.
- There must be a collaborative and inclusive approach to decision-making that makes the participation meaningful.
- Social networks and engagement in civic and community life is better for health and health outcomes.
- Speaking a language so everyone understands what is being said, that the information we give is accurate and travels up the chain without being lost in translation and keeping us informed about what is going on.
  
- Provide a safe space where people can be open with their opinion and not be afraid of being bullied.
- Establish community accessibility consultation groups which businesses must consult with during planning phase to give recommendations for universal design.



Picture Description: Eight people are together in a tight group and it seems like they are having a good time together as they are all smiling. This

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group represents people with disabilities, along with people from a diverse ethnic backgrounds and culture. Two people, one using a wheelchair and one wearing a prosthetic, are giving each other a high five to each other.

## CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION

Increase corporate capacity to lead, model and advocate for accessibility change-making within the City, deliver professional services and develop collaborative, positive attitudes in partnership with our communities.

### ***Programs and Services:***

- Make sure services and resources are presented in a way that is available to everyone; that language is inclusive and people are not being “othered”.
- Neighbourhood houses and community centres are our “living rooms” in the communities, so supporting these can help to make our city more accessible.
- The City could look for ways to better provide equitable funding for organizations.
- Community centres should have programs for persons with disabilities just as they do for seniors or families.
- Encourage community centres to hold a lot more events for people with disabilities to increase the social life for youths
- Programs should have additional support people available to persons with disabilities so they can participate.
- Having to fill out forms and having to prove your disability to achieve income assistance or access to a program or service are barriers.
- There is on-line ticketing for many of the Park Board facilities and programs. This makes it very difficult for people who are not confident using website. There should be in-person and over the phone ticket purchasing options as well.
- How can we integrate more supports for people who are low income to be able to access all the different services or be able to find ways to determine what is available to them?
  - It would be great to have a centralized hub where people can go to find out more about what services is available to them, and which services are accessible, in particular.
  - People don't even know what's in the City or what could help them to obtain better housing or better technology or better funding or home support.
  - People don't even know that there is such a thing as beach wheelchairs.
  - Invest in community-based services including:
    - Restorative programs.
    - Mentorship programs.
    - Substance use.
    - Create more opportunities for inter-generational interaction such as co-locating eldercare and

The City should not be waiting for the province or the federal government to tell them how to develop good accessibility plans.

The City should be the benchmark for the rest of the country.

- *Dialogue Participant*

childcare facilities.

- Have a service that helps people get their garbage to the curb which is not something every disabled person can do.
- Arts and culture – more accessibility needed.
- Is there any hearing assist capacity within civic theatres?
- More accessible seating at various venues, sports, and arts and culture.
- Expand criteria for the leisure access passes as Nanaimo and Surrey are doing so that people can self-identify as having a disability and it isn't being attached to low-income as identified by people with disabilities.
- Creating sports readily accessible for us with disabilities. Being able to play basketball with no kind of limitations.
- Public events:
  - Should be completing an accessibility audit and posting it on a website for public reference.
  - Is the City even using the Creating Accessible Events document that is on the City website?
  - Have designated places at events where there is a big television that you can see and provide captioning.
  - Provide staff/ volunteers available to assist people with disabilities as needed (not everyone has access to a care aid).

**Customer Service:**

- First point of contact is key to one's experience and can determine whether or not they come back.
- Sometimes it is like winning a lottery ticket when you need to talk to someone about your accessibility needs. You just hope you get that one person who is flexible or understanding enough to understand what it is that you need instead of following the policy manual.
- There should be an option to make an appointment rather than standing in line. For those who suffer with physical or chronic fatigue, waiting in line is not feasible.
- Make sure that services have the option of using an FM (frequency modulations) sound system or hearing loop system. For community centers and programming, staff need to understand there is a duty to accommodate disabled people. The rules and regulations need to be flexible so persons with a disability can fit in.
- There needs to be a change in culture so that as things are redesigned by the City of Vancouver, accessibility is at the forefront.
- Better integration and stronger collaboration between the City and organizations - a systemic approach to the

The City should not be waiting for the province or the federal government to tell them how to develop good accessibility plans.

The City should be the benchmark for the rest of the country.

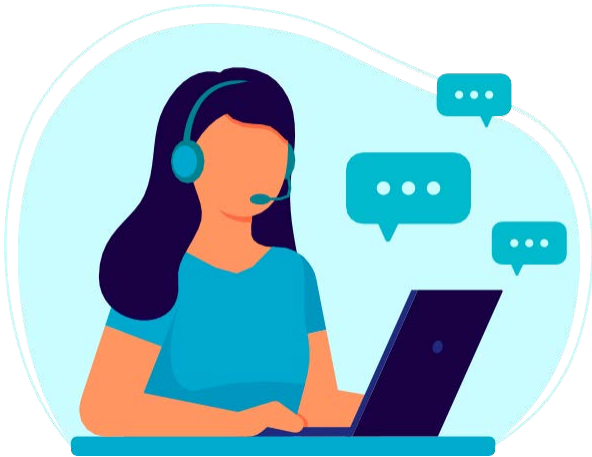
- *Dialogue Participant*



issues related to accessibility.

- Have more strategic planning activities particularly with the professional health services such as Vancouver Coastal Health. The integration of health and well-being for people with disabilities would be helpful.
  - Right now the City is working on the accessibility strategy but how much outreach to other organizations has been done? Is VCH part of that process?
  - The City should be talking to other organizations (e.g. VCH) about the strategy and then looking at ways they could partner together.
  - More collective collaboration amongst organizations, especially people with disabilities who should be part of the planning.
  - The City could do more in terms of recognizing those who are doing an exemplary job for being accessible and inclusive and showcase those initiatives.
  - The City should not be passing the buck; take responsibility for accessibility and show leadership.
  - There needs to be a way to measure and actually enforce everything that you outline within the Accessibility Strategy, otherwise most people won't be aware of it and follow through.
  - City should do a mapping process that identifies businesses that are accessible.
  - What is stopping this City from creating the Office of an Accessibility Advocate?
  - There needs to be a City planner position focussed on seniors and a Seniors Action Plan.
  - Do more research that looks at the differences about ageing sub-populations to understand what matters in enabling people to age in a better way.
  - There is very little data on persons with disabilities. We need data.
  - The Mayor should go to UBCM, where all of the provincial politicians get together with municipal politicians and have a sincere conversation with the ministers and the premier about addressing some of the issues that result from poverty that municipalities are left trying to clean up.
  - Provide more funding for the organizations that deliver services to persons with disabilities, seniors and immigrant services.
  - There should be a challenge to the City and developers to set aside a day where they spend the day in a manual wheelchair and try to do their jobs.
  - Ask questions about inclusion and accessibility whenever the City grants funds for events, activities or programs.
  - The City has a role in reducing stigma and discrimination through public education, staff training and awareness raising:
    - Consider a Public Awareness Campaign to help people understand the challenges that persons with disabilities face.
    - Think about people with ALL disabilities, not just physical or mental.
    - Educate community and the City about true accessibility especially around captioning, interpreting and interveners.
-

- Put some artwork on the street, reminding others that there are vulnerable people living in the community.
- Partner with the self-advocacy community to develop and lead sensitivity and awareness training about disabilities to City staff.
- Training for staff about understanding the needs of persons with disabilities and treating people with dignity and respect.
- Training staff is so important because if you have never been exposed to a disability, don't know how to behave around someone who may experience challenges accessing the service.



Picture Description: A person wearing a headset and sitting in front of a laptop. It shows the person is connecting with people as there are three conversation bubbles representing a dialogue which is happening over the phone or the computer

There were new themes that came up in answers to the question about what gets in your way to contributing or participating in the City, and provide some recommendations for the City to do to improve accessibility. Below is the list of responses along with the new themes in blue.

### *Income/Financial*

- High percentage of persons with disability living in poverty.
- When you are poor, you have no choices.
- Living in Vancouver is just too expensive.
- Accessing food and somewhere to live uses up all one's money and are unable to participate in community life.
- Expensive technology is a barrier for Deafblind people.
- If you can privately pay for your access, the City is

"It's a pain because like people just don't see us with disabilities – I feel like it's effected – like sometimes people look at us but don't give you consideration like let's hire you, or let's take you on board or something."

- Dialogue Participant

accessible to you. This City needs to be made accessible for everyone.

- Not only have to pay for the program but also pay for a 1:1 worker to accompany
- Don't want to have to put our adult children in homes out in the Fraser Valley as a result of high costs in Vancouver.
- It's difficult enough to live in Vancouver and support an adult who can't work - there used to be grants for property taxes. It's now next to impossible to receive those – such a quick and easy solution.
- Free recreation passes and reduced rates for accessing programs.
- People with disabilities get \$375/month for shelter costs – many people are advocating with provincial government regarding increasing disability rates
- Do anything that promotes free and affordable.
- Transportation fees to get to health services – many people can't afford to get to appointments.
- There is a correlation between economics, disability and food security.
- There should be free parking everywhere for persons with disabilities.

### ***Racialization/Discrimination***

- During the pandemic, there is so much racialization that has happened.
- People are discriminated against based on race, homelessness, substance use, mental health and so forth – discrimination and racism is a huge barrier to accessibility and inclusion.
- Some families avoid certain community spaces and events because of the racism and discrimination they experience.
- We came from our country to Canada and we had understood it was a peaceful country. But, somehow we are facing things that make us feel scared and unsafe.

### ***Intersectionality***

- People have intersecting identities and this has to be taken into consideration. There are multiple things that impact people including geographical accessibility, language, age-related issues, racism, sexism, language, etc.
  - We all have different experiences. It reflects our many identities. Women have different experiences than men as do non-binary people and seniors or people facing Anti-Asian racism.
  - The intersection of identities — gender, age, racial, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion — or “intersectionality” creates complications for people with disabilities when seeking full inclusion. These layers do not exist separately from each other but intersect to form a person's identity, and can magnify the discrimination and marginalisation they might experience.
  - Understanding that in addition to having a disability, a person has other identities such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religion that interact with each other and can magnify the discrimination and marginalisation they might
-

### *Reduce Stigma and Ableism through Awareness/Education/Training*

- How do we shift the perceptions of what it means to have a disability?
  - We need Vancouver to change to see disabled people the same as other people.
  - Understanding ableism before addressing accessibility – ableism is at the root of the problem.
  - Attitudinal barriers – that somehow because a person has a disability, they have low IQ or are notcapable.
  - We are missing out on the “wonderfulness” of people who do things differently.
  - Don’t patronize me; it makes it harder for me to be seen as an equal.
  - It is not part of our culture to work with people’s disabilities and find a way for them to contributemeaningfully and have that sense of normalcy.
  - There is an overall lack of empathy and lack of understanding.
  - It’s about education and attitude towards change and willingness towards change.
  - Ongoing education is important so there can be a better understanding of how ableism andother isms are interacting to create barriers
  - Education about the different types of disabilities (sensory, dementia, brain injury, etc.) at allevels of community and municipalities.
  - More understanding about dementia; sometimes it is an invisible disability and sometimespeople may present as able-bodied.
  - Needs to be some myth-busting and focussing on the incredible skills, talents and capabilitiesof person with disabilities.
  - Need to educate the rest of the populations – everyone is unique.
  - Educating people about substance use and safe supplies.
  - People need to learn from people with diverse abilities.
  - BC is not very tuned into “sensory” disabilities (noise and visual). Seems to be more awarenessin other provinces. Things such as lighting in stores, high pitch sounds on the SkyTrain, allergies, memory loss, – are all examples.
  - Disability is not always physical, many people experience trauma before coming to Canada.
  - The strong preference toward neurotypicality and the lack of meaningful education on neurodivergency. (Neurodivergence is the term for when someone’s brain processes, learns,and/or behaves differently from what is considered “typical.”)
  - So much has to do with educating Vancouverites. There is an accessible parking spot near ourhome and a neighbour said “not everybody is as lucky as you to have a parking spot like that.” It is not about the parking space; it is about seeing our needs for what they are.”
  - Start educating in the school system.
-

### ***Rights/Advocacy***

- Nobody is citing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Canada ratified it which means they have to do something about it. Seems to be no connecting to make this happen.
- Knowing people's rights will be a conduit to reducing the need for self-advocacy.
- Build a culture where individuals and families don't always have to be the ones advocating for themselves.

### ***Health Care***

- Hard to get services (Life labs, dentist, doctors). They don't always understand the needs and behaviours.
- Access to emergency or medical services can be challenging as it can be hard to advocate for yourself if you are very sick.
- Not enough mental health supports of young people and adults.
- Put more money into seniors and home care so the elderly can stay in their own homes.
- So difficult to find personal care attendants.
- Use of whiteboard or some sort of captioning system that can be made mandatory all over the hospital for communication accessibility.
- The design of new health care facilities, the cost of parking and access to safe parking need to be given serious consideration.

### ***Social Isolation/ Inclusion***

- There is not yet a really strong strategy for identifying people that are socially isolated and knowing where they are or inviting them to participate or being included.
- If we want to include people, we have to identify them and we have to reach out to them.
- We could be using various vehicles, the police incidents, fire incidents, opportunities of where there's some way of flagging or becoming aware of adults at risk of loneliness or isolation.
- People with disabilities experience social isolation and the pandemic has exacerbated, demonstrated that issue.
- Making sure people don't feel like they are "being othered."
- Being a caregiver – often unable to find someone to relieve.
- Isolation and stigma: seniors are less likely to go out and if there is a disability, even more so.

### ***Safety and Security***

- Being able to get to places in my wheelchair; sidewalks are unsafe for people with canes or other mobility devices.
  - Ability to ride safely and without fear.
  - Increase transit security especially at night.
  - Able to enter and use public facilities safely and without painful manoeuvring.
-

- Lack of safe spaces to use drugs.

### ***Access to Education***

- Universities need to be accessible.
- Schools are not always accessible.
- I am disabled and I want to go to school but I cannot afford it and have nobody to help with my children.

## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS**

Our community engagement process gave space for people with disabilities to share their stories, ideas, and feedback for making the Accessibility Strategy.

### ***How We Collected and Analyzed the Information:***

- The questions were made with the Accessibility Task Force and staff from the Social Policy Research and Data Team.
- Feedback was given by City staff and/or organization representative for the purposes of improving sessions.
- Each of the Dialogue Sessions were recorded with verbal consent.
- There was a note-taker for each session.
- Closed Captioning transcripts were reviewed and summarized.
- Summary reports from each Dialogue Session were given to participants to check if everything was right.
- The Shape Your City survey results were reviewed and combined with answers from the Dialogue Sessions

### ***Successes of the Community Engagement***

- ASL and Closed Captioning were welcomed.
- Participants liked that the City made this opportunity to be heard.
- Generally, sessions were well organized and participants felt that they had been provided with enough information.
- Questions seemed to work very well; many people liked that they were open-ended questions and could answer in their own words.
- All participants enjoyed having the space to provide their feedback and suggestions.
- Many of the participants liked having the background information emailed to them ahead of time.

### ***Challenges of the Community Engagement***

- People didn't find Webex to be user friendly.
  - The process for distributing honorariums was cumbersome and could be improved.
  - More time should be given to deal with technology issues.
  - Some community members may have been missed that did not have access to a technical device
  - Some community members may have not participated because of their technical skills or because 2 hours is too long.
  - The survey did not have enough room for long answers.
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- Some people felt that the survey should have been only completed by persons with disabilities and not service providers or caregivers.
- The majority of the community engagement happened over summer which may have made it hard for some people to take part.

## **NEXT STEPS**

This report is a summary of the responses from what was heard through the Dialogue Sessions and the Shape Your City Survey.

A more detailed overview of what we heard is being made. It will include information from more resources such as:

- The Internal Staff Working Group
- Reports from Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee
- Reports from Seniors Advisory Committee
- Other community engagement data

The feedback in this summary will guide the writing of the draft Accessibility Strategy.

More community engagement activities will take place later in 2022 to make sure that the draft Accessibility Strategy creates a City where all people feel valued, respected, and openly welcomed.

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## APPENDIX 3 Definition of Terms

<p><u>Accessibility</u></p>	<p>Accessibility refers to the absence of barriers that prevent individuals and/or groups from participating, contributing and benefiting in all aspects of society. Accessibility is fundamental to the quality of life, well-being and engagement in the social, economic, cultural, spiritual and political aspects of society. It is a key component of community inclusion, equity, and resilience.</p> <p>Accessibility applies an intersectional approach which addresses the impacts of all forms of discrimination and further addresses inequality and barriers to inclusion, without isolating one aspect of an individual’s identity from another.</p>
<p><u>Ableism</u></p>	<p>A system of thought and organizing based on the construction of disabled bodies and minds as inferior, used to justify neglect, abuse and disposal of people with disabilities who are seen as having less value, burdensome and unprofitable in a capitalist society. An ableist society assigns advantage and disadvantage based on one’s (dis)ability and other social categories; people born with a disability or who acquire a disability at some point in their life have for a long time been seen as less valuable than those who are able-bodied.</p>
<p><u>Barriers</u></p>	<p>Anything that hinders a person with a disability from full and equitable participation in society. Barriers are caused by many factors and may be emphasized by intersecting forms of discrimination.</p>
<p><u>Built Environment (or Built World)</u></p>	<p>The human-made environments (physical) that provide the setting for any activity. These are the environments in which people live, work, play and engage on a day-to-day basis.</p>
<p><u>Disability</u></p>	<p>Any physical, mental health, cognitive, intellectual, sensory or age-related impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. These disabilities may be visible or invisible and may be permanent, temporary or episodic. As well, disability can intersect with various identities of an individual which may result in compounding effects.</p>
<p><u>Diversity</u></p>	<p>The full range of different characteristics within individuals and among groups.</p>
<p><u>Equity</u></p>	<p>The provision of access in ways that addresses the unequal starting place of persons with disabilities; equitable approaches do not seek “equal” access measures and systems (which would not recognize that persons with disabilities may be disadvantaged) but rather access in forms that corrects disadvantage.</p> <p>There are nuanced differences between the concepts of equality and equity. Although both promote fairness, equality achieves this through treating everyone the same regardless of need, while equity achieves this through treating people differently dependent on need.</p>
<p><u>Universal Design</u></p>	<p>A concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life. Universal Design guidelines are often applied to physical infrastructure such as housing, products, and transportation.</p>

## APPENDIX 4

### Background of the Accessibility Strategy and Alignment of Our Work

On April 5, 2018, the City of Vancouver Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee unanimously passed a motion titled “Accessible City Strategy”. On May 2, 2018, City Council passed a motion on accessibility which included a request for a report back to Council with recommendations for moving forward with an Accessibility Strategy.

On September 7, 2018, a staff report (RTS No. 12581) was presented to Council with the following recommendations:

- A. Development of Phase 1 of an Accessibility Strategy in 2019
- B. Convening of an Accessibility Task Force with membership from the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, the Seniors’ Advisory Committee, and the People with Lived Experience Advisory on Mental Health and Substance Use Committee

On September 18, 2018, Council approved the development of Phase 1 of an Accessibility Strategy and identified a set of high-level deliverables and recommendations for additional phases. Future phases include

- recommendations for broader public engagement;
- development of a multi-year action plan;
- and accompanying implementation plan along with the required resources

#### *Aligning Our Work*

The work of developing the City’s accessibility strategy falls under the scope of the Healthy City Strategy, the City’s social sustainability plan which focuses on creating conditions for the well-being of all. Disability is also one of several identity-based strategies aligned with the City’s Equity Framework and City of Reconciliation framework as it seeks to address the root causes of ableism that are intricately connected to settler colonialism and capitalism. While the aspect of identity that is of focus in this strategy is disabilities, persons with disabilities are often discriminated against in ways that intersect with other forms of discrimination such as sexism, ageism, racism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia and more.

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## APPENDIX 5 Jurisdictional Scan

Through the adoption of *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change; A City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy*, the City reinforces its commitment to advancing and safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities as outlined in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD) and the *BC Human Rights Code*. The strategy is a step towards answering the call for action defined in the *Global Sustainable Development Goals*, and aligns with both federal and provincial legislation.

Federal accessibility legislation, the *Accessible Canada Act*, was enacted in June 2019 followed by the BC accessibility legislation, the *Accessible BC Act*, which was passed in June 2021. *The Accessible BC Act* calls on institutions and municipalities to be inclusive for all persons with disabilities by removing the barriers that prevent equal and meaningful participation, and by working together to meet forthcoming accessibility standards.

INTERNATIONAL			
Name	Link	Description	Structure of Implementation
<b><i>United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i></b>	<p><a href="https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html">https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html</a></p> <p>Monitoring of the Implementation of the Convention</p> <p><a href="https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/monitoring-of-the-implementation-of-the-convention.html">https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/monitoring-of-the-implementation-of-the-convention.html</a></p>	<p>The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (A/RES/61/106) were adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The adoption of the Convention follows decades of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. The Convention is a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights, where rights have been violated</p>	<p>The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consists of 18 members.</li> <li>• A body of independent experts which monitors implementation of the Convention by States parties.</li> <li>• All States parties are obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee documenting how the rights of persons with disabilities are being upheld.</li> <li>• The Committee examines each report and makes recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in respective States. It forwards these recommendations, in the form of concluding observations, to the State party concerned.</li> </ul>

		protection of rights must be reinforced.	
FEDERAL			
Name	Link	Description	Structure of Implementation
<b>Accessible Canada Act</b>	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/accessible-canada.html</a>	The <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> , adopted in 2019, provides for the development of accessibility standards and gives the Government of Canada the authority to work with stakeholders and persons with disabilities to create new accessibility regulations that will apply to sectors within the federal jurisdiction. These new regulations will set out requirements for organizations to follow in order to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. The <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> will also put in place compliance and enforcement measures, as well as an accessibility complaints mechanism.	The Government of Canada consulted with Canadians, from July 2016 to February 2017, to find out what an accessible Canada means to them. The report, " <a href="#">Creating new national accessibility legislation: What we learned from Canadians</a> ," released in May 2017, shares the key findings of these consultations. The Government of Canada is supporting community projects to provide greater access and opportunities for persons with disabilities. Calls for proposals will be launched which totaling up to \$5.6 million over two years through the Social Development Partnerships Program (SDPP), Disability component. The <a href="#">National AccessAbility Week (NAAW)</a> stream will provide up to \$1.6M in grants over two years to support projects that will help to: improve Canadians understanding of accessibility and inclusion; reduce stigma and attitudinal barriers towards persons with disabilities; and, enable the sharing of best practices and lessons learned across the disability community. The <a href="#">Accessible Canada Partnerships</a> stream will provide up to \$4M in contributions over two years to support projects involving multi-sectoral partnerships that contribute to the development of accessible and inclusively designed environments, spaces, programs and services.
PROVINCIAL			
Name	Link	Description	Structure of Implementation

<p><b>Accessible British Columbia Act</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation">https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation</a></p>	<p>With the adoption of the Accessible BC Act. The Government of British Columbia has developed new accessibility and inclusion legislation that works to identify, remove and prevent barriers that impede the full participation of people with disabilities in their communities. This legislation guides the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards and draws on the expertise and experience of people with disabilities. Accessibility standards will a variety of areas such as service delivery, education, employment, housing and the built environment, information and communication and transportation will rely on a mix of incentives, compliance and enforcement tools.</p>	<p>Province-wide public consultations on the development of proposed legislation were held between Sept. 16 and Nov. 29, 2019. The <a href="#">summary report</a> provides the key themes arisen from the public engagement. The Government reports each year on progress and success. The first independent review will occur after 5 years. Standards will be developed two at a time and will be implemented in a phased approach.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11">https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11</a> 10-year Accessibility Action Plan <a href="https://www.ontario.ca/page/path-2025-ontarios-accessibility-action-plan">https://www.ontario.ca/page/path-2025-ontarios-accessibility-action-plan</a></p>	<p>The <b>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)</b> sets out a process for developing and enforcing accessibility standards that organizations must follow. Ontario has a goal of making the province more accessible by 2025 through the Implementation and enforcement of the AODA standards.</p>	<p>The 10-year Accessibility Action Plan describes the next steps to engage employers, and strengthen and promote accessibility to ensure the government remain on track to create an accessible province in the decade ahead. The five accessibility standards in the AODA were developed by committees comprised of people with disabilities and sector representatives. Businesses, not-for-profits and public sector organizations must all file accessibility compliance reports on a regular basis.</p>

<p><b>An Act Respecting Accessibility in Nova Scotia</b></p>	<p><a href="https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/accessibility.pdf">https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/accessibility.pdf</a></p>	<p>Nova Scotia’s accessibility act adopted in 2017, outlines six standards for an accessible Nova Scotia. The standards are in the areas of goods and services, information and communication, public transportation and transportation infrastructure, employment, education, and the built environment which includes buildings, rights-of-way and outdoor spaces. The legislation puts in place an Accessibility Advisory Board. The majority of the board’s members are be persons with disabilities. An accessibility directorate is responsible for supporting accessibility initiatives and advancing broader disability-related issues.</p>	<p>The Government of Nova Scotia’s Accessibility Directorate is responsible for administering the accessibility act and advancing disability issues within government. The Accessibility Advisory Board is responsible for advising and making recommendations to the Minister of Justice about accessibility by establishing committees that help make recommendations for accessibility standards. The accessibility act required an independent, external reviewer to review the act within 4 years of when it came into effect in 2017 and every 5 years after. As part of the review process, the reviewer must consult with persons with disabilities and others affected by the legislation.</p>
<p><b>The Accessibility for Manitobans Act</b></p>	<p><a href="https://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/40-2/b026e.php">https://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/40-2/b026e.php</a>  Accessibility Compliance Framework <a href="https://accessibilitymb.ca/pdf/ama_compliance_framework.pdf">https://accessibilitymb.ca/pdf/ama_compliance_framework.pdf</a></p>	<p><i>The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)</i> became law in December 2013, with accessibility standards acting as regulations under law. This landmark legislation provides a proactive process to remove barriers affecting persons with disabilities and many other citizens. As each new standard is introduced, there are new requirements and compliance deadlines for affected organizations and businesses. The Manitoba Government is committed to achieve significant progress by 2023, making Manitoba more inclusive for everyone. The Accessibility Compliance Framework describes the different steps in the compliance process.</p>	

<p><b>Quebec - Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/tdm/cs/E-20.1">https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/tdm/cs/E-20.1</a></p>	<p>Quebec was one of the first provinces in Canada to adopt a law promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities. In 2004, the Quebec government amended its disability law from 1978. This law is now called the <i>Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration</i>.</p>	<p>Quebec's disability law only applies to the public sector (ministries, public agencies and municipalities). It does not articulate goals or penalties to ensure compliance.</p>
<p><b>Newfoundland and Labrador - Accessibility Act</b></p>	<p>Accessibility Act <a href="https://www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/accessibility-act/#:~:text=This%20enabling%20legislation%20allows%20the,from%20full%20participation%20in%20society">https://www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/accessibility-act/#:~:text=This%20enabling%20legislation%20allows%20the,from%20full%20participation%20in%20society</a> 2021 Bill 38 <a href="https://www.assembly.nl.ca/HouseBusiness/Bills/ga50session1/bill2138.htm">https://www.assembly.nl.ca/HouseBusiness/Bills/ga50session1/bill2138.htm</a></p>	<p>The <i>Accessibility Act</i> came into effect in December 2021. This enabling legislation allows the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to outline the principles and goals for an accessible province. The <i>Accessibility Act</i> will improve accessibility by identifying, preventing and removing barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from full participation in society.</p>	<p>An Accessibility Standards Advisory Board will be established. The board will be responsible for advising and making recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities regarding the establishment and content of accessibility standards and the time periods for implementation.</p>

**MUNICIPAL**

Name	Link	Description	Structure of Implementation
<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA</b>			
<p><b>City of Prince George</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.princegeorge.ca/City%20Services/Pages/Accessibility.aspx">https://www.princegeorge.ca/City%20Services/Pages/Accessibility.aspx</a></p>	<p>The City is developing an Age-Friendly Plan that aspires to create a community where people of all ages have a sense of belonging and live safely, actively, affordably, and barrier-free. The Advisory Committee on Accessibility aims to remove any physical or social barrier which prevents full participation by residents in all aspects of community life. The Committee seeks to advise Council, increase public awareness, and collect feedback on accessibility issues including</p>	<p><b>The Advisory Committee on Accessibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 members.</li> <li>• Council via Executive Committee</li> </ul> <p>The committee advises and assists Council, staff, and other committees with formulating and promoting strategies and actions to create and maintain a barrier-free community.</p>



		those affecting people with mobility devices, seniors, and the general public.	
<b>City of Victoria</b>	<p>Framework and Action Plan: <a href="https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/about/accessibility.html">https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/about/accessibility.html</a></p> <p>Accessibility Framework 2020: <a href="https://www.victoria.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Accessibility%20Framework%202020.pdf">https://www.victoria.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Accessibility%20Framework%202020.pdf</a></p> <p>Accessibility Advisory Committee <a href="https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/city/other-boards-committees/accessibility-advisory-committee.html">https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/city/other-boards-committees/accessibility-advisory-committee.html</a></p>	<p>Adopted by Council on October 8, 2020, the City's Accessibility Framework, Accessibility and Inclusion Policy, and accompanying Short-Term Action Plan operationalize the goal of providing accessible facilities, services, regulations, programs and employment to proactively remove and prevent barriers faced by individuals in our community. The Accessibility Framework applies accessibility to all aspects of City planning and operations, from our capital investments and municipal programs, to front-line services for residents and businesses.</p>	<p><b>Accessibility Advisory Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 members</li> <li>• Council appointed</li> <li>• Reporting: Council via Council Liaison</li> </ul> <p>The Accessibility Advisory Committee champions, informs and provides feedback and recommendations to City Council and staff on a range of City initiatives, programs and services through an accessibility lens. The committee provides feedback to staff on accessibility considerations through the 2022 Pilot on Responsive Budgeting Process. It also comments on new provincial accessibility legislation to inform City planning and program changes on suggested priority actions for initial implementation.</p>
<b>ALBERTA</b>			
<b>City of Lethbridge</b>	<p>Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan: <a href="https://getinvolvedlethbridge.ca/6316/widgets/32841/documents/36630/download">https://getinvolvedlethbridge.ca/6316/widgets/32841/documents/36630/download</a></p> <p>Mobility / Accessibility Working Group <a href="https://www.lethbridge.ca/living-here/getting-around/Pages/MobilityAccessibility.aspx">https://www.lethbridge.ca/living-here/getting-around/Pages/MobilityAccessibility.aspx</a></p>	<p>The Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP) is a long-term visionary plan to create a universally accessible city that is designed for all people, regardless of ability, where everyone can meaningfully contribute to, and engage with their community.</p>	<p><b>Mobility / Accessibility Working Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An internal group to the City comprised of representatives from various City Business Units.</li> <li>• Responsible for increasing communication and collaboration with City Business Units and building external partnerships with local agencies, institutions and the development community to increase awareness and understanding, identify opportunities and explore potential partnerships to advance common accessibility goals in Lethbridge.</li> <li>• Reporting: be a conduit to Senior Leadership and to Council on accessibility matters. Prepare an Annual Report for Council and</li> </ul>

			maintain a prioritized list of upcoming projects to be considered in Annual Budget.
<b>City of Edmonton</b>	The Accessibility for People with Disabilities Policy: <a href="https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/initiatives_innovation/city-accessibility-policy.aspx">https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/initiatives_innovation/city-accessibility-policy.aspx</a>	<p>To guides the development and implementation of City policies and civic engagement, programs and services, communications and technology, and infrastructure to ensure full consideration of individual's needs and diverse abilities.</p> <p>To ensures people with disabilities are treated with respect, and have equitable access and opportunity to participate to the fullest in City policies and civic engagement, programs and services, communications and technology, and infrastructure.</p>	<p><b>Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 members</li> <li>• Council appointed</li> <li>• Reporting: Council via Standing Committee</li> </ul> <p>Provides advice and recommendations to Council about facilities and other infrastructure, programs, services, activities and policies, with the goal of improving the City's livability, inclusiveness and accessibility for individuals with disabilities.</p>
<b>City of Calgary</b>	Calgary Corporate Accessibility Policy: <a href="https://www.calgary.ca/CA/city-clerks/Documents/Council-policy-library/csps003-Calgary-Corporate-Accessibility-Policy.pdf?noredirect=1">https://www.calgary.ca/CA/city-clerks/Documents/Council-policy-library/csps003-Calgary-Corporate-Accessibility-Policy.pdf?noredirect=1</a>	<p>To ensure the greatest level of access, which is the right or opportunity to reach, use, or participate for people with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities.</p> <p>To reduce barriers to City provided services to ensure people with disabilities have the option of participating fully as citizens of the City</p> <p>To ensure people with disabilities are treated with respect and City services are provided to people with disabilities without a loss of dignity.</p>	<p><b>Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 members</li> <li>• Council appointed</li> <li>• Council via Standing Policy Committee</li> </ul> <p>Provides strategic advice and makes recommendations to City Council and City Administration.</p>
<b>SASKATCHEWAN</b>			
<b>City of Regina</b>	<a href="https://www.regina.ca/about-regina/accessibility/index.html">https://www.regina.ca/about-regina/accessibility/index.html</a>	The City of Regina is committed to providing accessible and inclusive	<p><b>Accessibility Advisory Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 members.</li> <li>• Council via Executive Committee</li> </ul>

		programs and services for all residents in our community.	The City of Regina Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) advises City Administration and City Council on strategies to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of services, programs, facilities and other infrastructure, including the identification and removal of barriers that hinder full participation in the community by some Regina residents.
<b>MANITOBA</b>			
<b>City of Winnipeg</b>	Accessibility Plan: <a href="https://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/PublicEngagement/AccessibilityPlan/default.stm#ab-undefined">https://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/PublicEngagement/AccessibilityPlan/default.stm#ab-undefined</a>	The purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to participation, and increase inclusion for all citizens and visitors to Winnipeg.	<p><b>Human Rights Committee of Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8-12 members</li> <li>• Council appointed</li> <li>• Council via Executive Policy Committee</li> </ul> <p>Serves as an advisory body to the Mayor and City Council, on human rights, equity, diversity, peace, and access and disability related issues and emerging trends as they affect Winnipeg communities, as well as the adherence to and application of existing legislation.</p>
<b>ONTARIO</b>			
<b>St. Catherine's</b>	Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: <a href="https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/community-services-and-supports/resources/Documents/Multi-Year-Accessibility-Plan_2021-2025.pdf">https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/community-services-and-supports/resources/Documents/Multi-Year-Accessibility-Plan_2021-2025.pdf</a>	The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements of the AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Ontario Regulation 191/11 (as amended) which reflects a number of accessibility standards that organizations across Ontario, including the City, are required to comply with.	<p><b>Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 members</li> <li>• Council appointed</li> <li>• Council via Social Sustainability Committee</li> </ul> <p>Makes recommendations to City Council regarding the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards relating to City services or facilities.</p>

<p><b>City of Toronto</b></p>	<p>Accessibility at the City of Toronto:  <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/accessibility-at-the-city-of-toronto/">https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/accessibility-at-the-city-of-toronto/</a>          Accessibility Policy:  <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/city-administration/corporate-policies/people-equity-policies/corporate-accessibility-policy/">https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/city-administration/corporate-policies/people-equity-policies/corporate-accessibility-policy/</a>          Multi-Year Action Plan:  <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/accessibility-at-the-city-of-toronto/multi-year-accessibility-plan/">https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/accessibility-at-the-city-of-toronto/multi-year-accessibility-plan/</a></p>	<p>The Accessibility Policy establishes a framework for compliance with the City's commitment to accessibility, requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the AODA, and additional City requirements.</p>	<p><b>Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 members</li> <li>• Council appointed</li> <li>• Council via Executive Committee</li> </ul> <p>Provides advice on the requirements and implementation of AODA accessibility standards, preparation of accessibility reports and other matters for which Council may seek advice, as required under AODA.</p>
<p><b>City of Mississauga</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.mississauga.ca/our-organization/accessibility-at-the-city/accessibility-plans-and-reports/">https://www.mississauga.ca/our-organization/accessibility-at-the-city/accessibility-plans-and-reports/</a></p> <p>The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the City's strategy to meet legislated accessibility standards.  <a href="#">Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018 to 2022</a></p>	<p>Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the City of Mississauga is required to develop multi-year accessibility plans to help make Ontario accessible by 2025. This is the City's second multi-year accessibility plan (MYAP) which builds on the accomplishments of the 2012-2017 plan. While the City is compliant with all requirements under the AODA and its Standards, this plan acts as our accessibility road map, outlining key actions to maintain compliance. It also describes additional non-legislative initiatives designed to create a more inclusive community. It helps us relay our commitment to accessibility and an inclusive community.</p> <p>The plan is based on best practice research, as well as input from the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee, Staff Accessibility</p>	<p><b>Accessibility Advisory Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9-12 members.</li> <li>• Council via Executive Committee</li> </ul> <p>The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall act in an advisory capacity to Council through reports to General Committee and shall advise, recommend and assist the City of Mississauga in promoting and facilitating a barrier-free Mississauga for citizens of all abilities (universal accessibility), including persons with disabilities. AAC's mandate will work to further the City's commitment mainly to its 'Belong' and 'Move' Pillars (although, accessibility planning needs to be integrated into all pillars to create a universally accessible community).</p>

		<p>Resource Team, persons with disabilities, accessibility stakeholders and staff. It is organized around the following standards and general requirements of the AODA.</p>	
<p><b>City of Brantford</b></p>	<p><a href="https://www.brantford.ca/en/your-government/accessibility.aspx">https://www.brantford.ca/en/your-government/accessibility.aspx</a></p> <p>Brantford Accessibility Plan 2020-2025 <a href="https://www.brantford.ca/en/your-government/resources/Documents/Accessibility/2020-2025-Brantford-Accessibility-Plan.pdf">https://www.brantford.ca/en/your-government/resources/Documents/Accessibility/2020-2025-Brantford-Accessibility-Plan.pdf</a></p> <p>Accessibility Policy <a href="https://www.brantford.ca/en/your-government/resources/Documents/Accessibility/AccessibilityPolicy-Corp034.pdf">https://www.brantford.ca/en/your-government/resources/Documents/Accessibility/AccessibilityPolicy-Corp034.pdf</a></p>	<p>The City of Brantford is committed to removing barriers to access programs and services in our community and work to provide equal opportunities for all under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA). The City's Accessibility Plan outlines our short-term and long-term goals to remove barriers for people with disabilities. Our 2020 to 2025 Accessibility Plan is also available for review. For details on our progress, please review our annual status update. Our accessibility policy details the standards for the City's accessible services.</p>	<p><b>Brantford Accessibility Advisory Committee</b> The Committee advises Council on issues related to removing barriers in our community and improving access to municipal programs and services. The purpose of the Brantford Accessibility Advisory Committee is to act as the advisory body on matters related to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and universal accessibility within Brantford.</p>
<p><b>The Town of Kapuskasing</b></p>	<p>Kapuskasing – Multi Year Accessibility Plan 2015 - 2020 <a href="http://www.kapuskasing.ca/en/governing/resources/Documents/Multi-Year---Accessibility-Plan-2015-2020.pdf">http://www.kapuskasing.ca/en/governing/resources/Documents/Multi-Year---Accessibility-Plan-2015-2020.pdf</a></p>	<p>In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act to make Ontario accessible by 2025. These standards are rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario need to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities have more opportunities to participate in everyday life. Under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the Town of Kapuskasing is required to establish, implement, maintain and document a multiyear accessibility plan. This plan outlines the Town of Kapuskasing's strategy to</p>	<p><b>Accessibility Advisory Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 members.</li> <li>• Council via Executive Committee</li> </ul> <p>The Committee is responsible to prepare an annual accessibility plan as mandated by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (AODA). The Committee is committed to improve opportunities for people with disabilities, accessibility planning, identify barriers and to provide for involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to enable full participation.</p>

		identify, prevent and remove accessibility barriers, and meet its requirements under the IASR.	
<b>City of Oshawa</b>	<p><a href="https://www.oshawa.ca/residents/Accessibility.asp">https://www.oshawa.ca/residents/Accessibility.asp</a></p> <p>The multi-year 2019 - 2023 Oshawa Accessibility Plan</p> <p><a href="https://www.oshawa.ca/residents/resources/Accessibility/2019-2023-Accessibility-Plan---Council-approved---Accessible-version.pdf">https://www.oshawa.ca/residents/resources/Accessibility/2019-2023-Accessibility-Plan---Council-approved---Accessible-version.pdf</a></p>	As required in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, many municipalities must prepare multi-year Accessibility Plans. The City is committed to the development of an inclusive, healthy and safe community by providing accessible facilities, programs and services for everyone to enjoy. The multi-year 2019 - 2023 Oshawa Accessibility Plan sets out the steps the City will take to improve accessibility and meet the legislated requirements.	<p><b>Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 members.</li> <li>• Council via Executive Committee</li> </ul> <p>The Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee is a statutory Committee required to be established through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. City Council is required to approve plans that identify, remove and prevent barriers that may limit residents and visitors with disabilities when they are using City facilities, programs and services. The Committee advises Council and staff on specific initiatives to be taken by the municipality to reduce and prevent barriers in order to cultivate inclusion within the community.</p>
<b>City of London</b>	<p>2018-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan</p> <p><a href="https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2020-12/2018-2021%20COL%20Multi-Year%20Accessibility%20Plan%20-%20FINAL.pdf">https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2020-12/2018-2021%20COL%20Multi-Year%20Accessibility%20Plan%20-%20FINAL.pdf</a></p>	The Corporation of the City of London is committed to providing quality goods, services, and facilities that are accessible to all persons we serve. We will continue to work with the community and allocate appropriate resources toward the elimination of accessibility barriers in customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation and the design of public spaces and are committed to meeting the requirements of applicable legislation, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code. This 2018-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the City of London's strategy to identify, remove, and prevent barriers within our municipal	<p><b>Accessibility Advisory Committee</b></p> <p>The Accessibility Advisory Committee (ACCAC) continues to work in collaboration with the City of London to remove barriers and facilitate accessibility throughout our city.</p>



		services, programs, and facilities and meet the legislative requirements set out by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. The City is currently working on the 2022-2025 plan.	
<b>City of Ottawa</b>	<p>Accessibility Policy  <a href="https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/your-city-government/policies-and-administrative-structure/administrative-policies/accessibility-policies-and-procedures#accessibility-policy">https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/your-city-government/policies-and-administrative-structure/administrative-policies/accessibility-policies-and-procedures#accessibility-policy</a></p>	<p>The City of Ottawa Accessibility Policy combines all of the requirements of the AODA Accessible Standards for Customer Service Regulation with the requirements in the AODA Integrated Accessibility Regulations to create one Accessibility Policy. The Accessibility Policy ensures the provision of equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of City services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity and that is equitable in relation to the broader public in the areas of customer service, information and communication, employment and taxis.</p>	<p><b>Accessibility Advisory Committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 members.</li> <li>• Council via Executive Committee</li> </ul> <p>The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) provides advice to Council and consults on projects required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and many more, where the City benefits from an accessibility lens.</p> <p>The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall report through the Community and Protective Services Committee to City Council; however, it may also report to another Standing Committee where appropriate, depending on the issue.</p>
<b>City of Vaughan</b>	<p>Corporate Accessibility Policy  <a href="https://www.vaughan.ca/cityhall/departments/ochro/General%20Documents/Vaughan%20-%20Accessibility%20Policy.docx.pdf">https://www.vaughan.ca/cityhall/departments/ochro/General%20Documents/Vaughan%20-%20Accessibility%20Policy.docx.pdf</a></p>	<p>The City of Vaughan is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equitable access for residents, visitors, and employees with visible or non-visible disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility, and by meeting the accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005</p>	<p><b>ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 members.</li> <li>• Council via Executive Committee</li> </ul> <p>The City of Vaughan has established an advisory committee, the majority of members whom are persons with disabilities. The committee shall advise Council about the requirements and implementation of AODA accessibility standards, preparation of accessibility reports, including access for persons with disabilities to a building or premises, and other matters for which Council may seek advice.</p>



		<p>(AODA). The Corporate Accessibility Policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other City of Vaughan policies, standards, procedures, By-laws and guidelines to comply with the standards developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ont Regulation 429/07 (ASCS), the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ont Regulation 191/11 (IASR) and future regulations, as amended.</p>	
<p><b>City of Waterloo</b></p>	<p>Multi-year Accessibility Plan  <a href="https://www.waterloo.ca/en/government/resources/Documents/Cityadministration/2018-2022-City-of-Waterloo-accessibility-plan-FINAL.pdf">https://www.waterloo.ca/en/government/resources/Documents/Cityadministration/2018-2022-City-of-Waterloo-accessibility-plan-FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p>City of Waterloo Accessibility Standards  <a href="https://www.waterloo.ca/en/government/resources/Documents/Development-charges-and-guidelines/Accessibility-Standards-Guide.pdf">https://www.waterloo.ca/en/government/resources/Documents/Development-charges-and-guidelines/Accessibility-Standards-Guide.pdf</a></p>	<p>The City of Waterloo Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (the “Plan”) for 2018-2022 describes how the Corporation will continue to prevent and remove accessibility barriers. This new plan builds on the previous multi-year accessibility plan which was created and introduced in 2013. Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) organizations are required to develop multi-year accessibility plans. The Plan addresses how the City of Waterloo will continue to meet the AODA requirements. The AODA legislative requirements guide the framework of the Plan. The new multi-year accessibility plan (the Plan) includes how the City of Waterloo will continue to meet its commitments in providing goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all.</p>	<p><b>Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Max 15 members.</li> <li>• Council via Executive Committee</li> </ul> <p>The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) is a joint committee of the Cities of Waterloo and Kitchener, Region of Waterloo and the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Woolwich and Wilmot and is appointed the task of advising the participating municipalities on the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of their respective Accessibility Plans. The councils also seek advice from GRAAC on the accessibility of buildings, structures or premises that the municipalities purchase, build, renovate or lease. GRAAC reviews site plans and drawings for new municipal buildings or developments. The Built Environment Sub Committee of GRAAC was formed in order to manage the volume of municipal build items coming forth to GRAAC meetings.</p>
<p><b>QUEBEC</b></p>			

<p><b>City of Montreal</b></p>	<p>Stratégie d'interventions en accessibilité universelle / Municipal Universal Accessibility Policy <a href="https://portail-m4s.s3.montreal.ca/pdf/sdis_politique_au_2021.pdf">https://portail-m4s.s3.montreal.ca/pdf/sdis_politique_au_2021.pdf</a></p> <p>Une stratégie d'intervention 2021-2022 / A 2021-2022 intervention strategy <a href="https://portail-m4s.s3.montreal.ca/pdf/sdis_strategie_au_2021-2022.pdf">https://portail-m4s.s3.montreal.ca/pdf/sdis_strategie_au_2021-2022.pdf</a></p>	<p>Politique municipale en accessibilité universelle : un cadre pour l'action La Stratégie AU 2021-2022 a été élaborée en tenant compte de la Politique municipale d'accessibilité universelle, sur laquelle se fondent les actions de la Ville en matière d'accessibilité universelle. Adoptée en 2011, cette politique est le fruit d'une importante démarche de coopération et de concertation entre les différents services, les arrondissements et les partenaires du milieu. Elle cible quatre axes d'intervention, soit : l'accessibilité architecturale et urbanistique ; l'accès inclusif aux programmes, aux services et à l'emploi ; les communications ; et la sensibilisation et la formation.</p> <p>Municipal policy on universal accessibility: a framework for action. The AU Strategy 2021-2022 was developed taking into account the Municipal Policy which included some actions. Adopted in 2011, this policy is the result of a major approach of cooperation and consultation between the various departments, boroughs and community partners. It targets four areas of intervention, namely: architectural and urban accessibility; inclusive access to programs, services and to work; the communications; and awareness and training.</p>	
<p><b>NOVA SCOTIA</b></p>			
<p><b>City of Halifax</b></p>	<p>Access by Design Strategy: <a href="https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/access-by-design-2030.pdf">https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/access-by-design/access-by-design-2030.pdf</a></p>	<p>The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), through the Diversity and Inclusion office, continue work on</p>	<p><b>Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 members</li> </ul>

		<p>HRM's framework and reporting model for Halifax's Inclusive and Accessible initiative with consultation and input from Walk 'n Roll Halifax, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and other community organizations and individuals, with the framework to be in alignment with the Council priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Healthy, Liveable Communities (Recreation &amp; Leisure)</li><li>• Social Development (Accessible Community)</li><li>• Transportation (Interconnected &amp; Strategic Growth)</li></ul> <p>A Safe &amp; Accessible Transportation Network)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executive Committee appointed</li><li>• Council via Executive Committee</li></ul> <p>Advises the Municipality on the impact of municipal policies, programs and services on persons with disabilities.</p>
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**1. BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

**Goal:** A built environment that aligns with Universal Design principles where capital projects and public spaces incorporate the highest level of accessibility standards so that everyone can access all physical infrastructure in the city.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	CITY ACTIONS UNDERWAY AND IN DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To mandate universal design principles to guide design, policy, planning and development process.</li> <li>To establish Vancouver specific policies and standards that exceed current accessibility requirements for new construction in the city and that meet multidimensional contexts of persons with disabilities. These standards must be in alignment with accessibility standards to come into force within the <i>Accessible BC Act</i>.</li> <li>To identify accessibility experts within the City structure and set up a process for these staff to provide advice on ensuring accessibility in building design, landscape and public space plans; make recommendations to developers and address community inquiries related to construction, permits, enforcement and or retrofits requests.</li> <li>To develop a process or provide resources to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities that want to inquire and provide input in accessibility related matters including permits, planning processes, enforcement and safety and security issues.</li> <li>To conduct a safety and security audit of public spaces and city facilities using an intersectional lens to identify improvements that need to meet updated accessibility standards.</li> <li>To leverage City's functions to raise awareness and provide accessibility expert advice to support developers, business and the broader community to design and create barrier free and accessible spaces in all city infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> Review the Current <i>Vancouver Building By-law</i> and <i>Standards of Maintenance By-law Section 9 on Building Elevators</i>. Identify amendments and/or actions to ensure that housing operators have realistic plans and the necessary tools to provide assistance to residents who have difficulty with stairs when elevators are broken and/or out of service. <i>Lead: Development, Buildings &amp; Licensing (License Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> Develop checklists for building owners and residents on how to be prepared and what to do when residential elevators are out of service; and share information with industry and advocacy organizations as a way to raise awareness about accessibility in the built environment. <i>Lead: Development, Buildings &amp; Licensing (License Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 3:</b> In consultation with the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) develop an accessible version of the Zoning and Development By-law in a format that meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA or higher <i>Lead: Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (Citywide and Regional Planning)</i></p> <p><b>Action 4:</b> Develop design options and governance models for City-owned co-located non-profit facilities, which include the integration of accessible and universal design guidelines. <i>Lead: Arts, Culture, and Community Services (Social Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 5:</b> From <i>Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver Social Infrastructure Strategy</i>, explore scope for designing adaptable, functional, inclusive, and accessible social-serving spaces for all abilities and ages, particularly for persons with disabilities. This also includes safer and more welcoming spaces for all identities, genders, and cultures. Examples of space include overdose prevention washrooms and facilities that could accommodate cultural practices such as brushing off and smudging. <i>Lead: Arts, Culture, and Community Services (Social Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 6:</b> Continue to work on Universal Inclusive Design and Accessibility Program implementation for City-owned buildings <i>Lead: Real Estate and Facility Management (Facilities Planning and Development)</i></p> <p><b>Action 7:</b> Implement the accessibility building accreditation certification steps necessary for all new future City owned buildings to be designed and built to meet Gold certification by the Rick Hansen Foundation, and to add this requirement to the City of Vancouver design guidelines and construction standards. <i>Lead: Real Estate and Facility Management (Facilities Planning and Development)</i></p>

	<p><b>Action 8:</b> To train and certify two or more City staff - REFM to support early stage project review and to support Rick Hansen Foundation certification process for new City owned buildings</p> <p><b>Action 9:</b> Continue to work on the REFM Universal Inclusive Design and Accessibility Program implementation for exiting City-owned buildings to continue conducting accessibility audits of public facing City owned facilities to identify and deliver prioritized improvements needed as funding allows to meet accessibility standards, and to evaluate the feasibility to achieve the Rick Hansen Foundation certification for this work. <b>Lead:</b> <i>Real Estate and Facility Management (Facilities Planning and Development)</i></p> <p><b>Action 10:</b> Renovate the existing City owned buildings by piloting the requirements and work involved to meet Gold Rick Hansen certification and report back on outcomes to implement in all future City of Vancouver major renovations <b>Lead:</b> <i>Real Estate and Facility Management (Facilities Planning and Development)</i></p> <p><b>Action 11:</b> To train and certify one or more City (REFM) staff to support early stage project review while supporting the Rick Hansen Foundation certification process for new City owned buildings <b>Lead:</b> <i>Real Estate and Facility Management (Facilities Planning and Development)</i></p>
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**EXAMPLE OF ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY**

*Note: While the actions below are not currently prioritized for the proposed work plan, they are noted here for future consideration by the Accessibility Committee and staff as work progresses.*

**City Policy, Standards and Regulations**

- Develop an “accessible designation” checklist
- Hire a full-time accessibility expert to promote accessibility and support developers in making their projects more accessible and inclusive
- Continue to recognize outstanding examples of accessibility through a City accessibility award program
- Ensure standards promote:
  - good quality street lighting and paving
  - accessible pathways where every one has the opportunity to develop social connections and not live in isolation.
  - tactile cues in the built environment including crosswalks and intersection walks with vibration
  - captions, ASL, interpreters, deaf-blind accessibility, and different tactile things in built environment and process for designing them.
  - Deliver accessibility related signs and information in multiple formats to account for visual, sensory, cognitive, auditory disabilities
- Review character design restrictions and aesthetic considerations currently in place through an accessibility lens.

**Public Realm & New Development:**

- Ensure good quality street lighting and paving
- Consider light intensity and type needed to make the built environment sensory aware
- Provide accessible pathways where everyone has the opportunity to develop social connections and not live in isolation.
- Build wider curbs and more ramps
- Prioritize accessibility over aesthetics in sidewalk design
- Add tactile cues in the built environment including crosswalks and intersection walks with vibration
- Provide more accessible seating and benches in public spaces, arts, cultural and sport venues
- Create more accessible playgrounds for kids

New Development

- Provide places to sit in bathrooms
- Provide change tables in men’s bathrooms
- Ensure private businesses are fully accessible for wheelchair users

**Existing Development:**

Retrofits

- Build wider curbs and more ramps
- Ensure private businesses are fully accessible for wheelchair users
- Create more accessible playgrounds for kids
- Provide places to sit in bathrooms
- Include change tables in men's bathrooms

Maintenance

- Fix unlevelled sidewalks and broken pavers in the Downtown East Side
- Ensure By-law enforcement on private property
- Ensure accessibility in older buildings
- Include change tables in men's bathrooms

**2. TRANSPORTATION**

**Goal:** Apply universal design principles to guide transportation planning and design, to connect people to their daily needs regardless of their abilities.

**COMMUNITY PRIORITIES**

- To mandate universal design principles to guide transportation planning and design.
- To review wayfinding standards through an accessibility and intersectional lens.
- To increase awareness of pedestrian safety to ensure positive experiences of people with disabilities and seniors.
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- To conduct a safety and security audit of transit spaces using an intersectional lens to identify improvements that need meet updated accessibility standards.
- To leverage City's functions to raise awareness and provide accessibility expert advice to individuals involved in the transit system, ride hailing system, or anyone providing mobility supports to people with disabilities.
- To assess parking standards around the city to prioritize the needs for people with disabilities.

**CITY ACTIONS UNDERWAY AND IN DEVELOPMENT**

- Action 1:** Reducing the barriers to walking and using mobility devices on sidewalks and pathways through city-wide programs and pedestrian upgrades such as the Climate Emergency five-year walking plan, Curb Ramp Program and improved navigation measures like audible signals and tactile pavers.  
*Lead: Engineering Services (Transportation Division, with Street Activities)*
- Action 2:** Expand Cycling and Greenways Network - Advancement of an 'All Ages and Abilities Network' provides for improved facility design for a wider variety of bicycles and mobility aids, easier and more comfortable use by all users, and encourages micromobility device users to choose the road, rather than the sidewalk.  
*Lead: Engineering Services (Transportation Division, with Street Activities)*
- Action 3:** Upgrade bus stops for universal accessibility, including increasing seating and shelter from the elements, increasing landing pads for ramp deployment and mobility devices, and improving connections to sidewalks and pathways.  
*Lead: Engineering Services (Transit Integration and Projects Branch, with Street Activities Branch)*
- Action 4:** Amend the Parking By-law to update accessible parking requirements for new developments, including the introduction of van-accessible parking spaces and improvements to design standards for accessible parking spaces.  
*Lead: Engineering Services (Parking Management Branch)*
- Action 5:** Update accessible parking requirements for new development to ensure sufficient quantity to meet the needs of the current and future population.  
*Lead: Engineering Services (Parking Management Branch)*
- Action 6:** Explore criteria for the installation of accessible parking zones on-street in residential areas  
*Lead: Engineering Services (Parking Management Branch)*

	<p><b>Action 7:</b> Provide opportunities for rest at regular intervals by increasing the amount of seating available on and along sidewalks and other pedestrian paths. <i>Lead: Engineering Services (Transportation Division, with Street Activities)</i></p>
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**EXAMPLE OF ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY**

*Note: While the actions below are not currently prioritized for the proposed work plan, they are noted here for future consideration by the Accessibility Committee and staff as work progresses.*

- To require appropriate hands-on disability related driver training for all Passenger Directed Transportation drivers to ensure safe transportation of passengers with disabilities
- advocating and promoting the elimination of barriers for persons with disabilities to access Transportation Network Systems, such as the incorporation of accessible vehicles, payment with cash or Taxi Savers, and alternative booking portals
- To research the ways that accessibility fees are currently used to ensure equal transportation options for citizens with disabilities in other municipalities and provinces in Canada
- To create accessible parking for individuals with accessibility needs, as well as their caretakers and visitors
- To ensure that accessible washrooms be included in any plans
- To ensure clear signage to caution motorists about vulnerable pedestrians and to give priority to emergency vehicles
- To assign designated loading and unloading zones that will allow people sufficient time to safely and conveniently embark and disembark at SkyTrain stations
- To make sure that cycling and pedestrian routes should be clearly marked by painted lines or different surface textures.
- To increase the real accessibility of the conventional bus system, so more persons with disabilities can use the bus instead of the more expensive HandyDART
- To implement a “no trip denial” policy for persons with disabilities for buses, taxis, ride hailing services, including the requirement to allow persons with wheelchairs to board at all bus stops whether they are labelled accessible or not.

**3. HOUSING**  
**Goal: The City of Vancouver continues to work to create accessible, affordable, market and non-market housing for persons with disabilities.**

<b>COMMUNITY PRIORITIES</b>	<b>CITY ACTIONS UNDERWAY AND IN DEVELOPMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To mandate universal design principles to guide housing design, policy and planning in the City.</li> <li>• To encourage the City to build stronger relationships with organizations to provide supportive housing programs and services for people with disabilities similar to the Right Fit Program<sup>31</sup>.</li> <li>• To build partnerships and work with disability community to advocate for increases in income assistance levels for shelter and advocate with the Province and Federal governments for more rental supplements for persons with disabilities.</li> <li>• To work with the disability community on developing and standardizing criteria to prioritize access to accessible units and public housing for those with most need.</li> <li>• To work with profit and non-profit developers to ensure that accessibility is built in to all housing developments</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> Engage with the disability community to gather feedback on policies and guidelines (e.g. 5% requirement for accessible units) of new city-owned social and supportive housing projects. <i>Lead: Projects, Planning, Development &amp; Sustainability (Housing Policy and Regulation) and Arts, Culture, and Community Services (Non-Market Housing Development and Operations; Housing and Homelessness Services)</i></p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> Work with BC Housing, non-profit operators, and persons with disabilities who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness to identify changes that will improve accessibility in temporary shelters. <i>Lead: Arts, Culture, and Community Services (Housing and Homelessness Services)</i></p> <p><b>Action 3:</b> Ensure that services provided by the City’s Renter Office, including the Renter Enquiry Line, Renter Services Grants and proposed Renter Services Centre, meet the accessibility needs of renters. <i>Lead: Arts, Culture, and Community Services (Housing and Homelessness Services)</i></p> <p><b>Action 4:</b> Continue to connect non-profit operators with the Right Fit project to assist in matching all accessible units in new social housing on City land with those in need.</p>

<sup>31</sup> Right Fit Program is a multi-partner service designed to address the crisis in wheelchair accessible housing by matching affordable, accessible homes and independent living supports with people who need them in the Vancouver region of British Columbia.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To advocate for potential financial opportunities, such as the SAFER<sup>32</sup> program to support adaptations to make existing homes more accessible so people can stay in their homes</li> <li>• To improve the accessibility of emergency shelters and provide more temporary transitional housing options for persons with disabilities that are searching for a permanent home.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Lead: Arts, Culture, and Community Services (Housing and Homelessness Services; Non-Market Housing Development and Operations)</i></p> <p><b>Action 5:</b> The City is exploring how to best enable accessible ground-level units in multiplexes as part of Council Motion B.3 (Making Home: Housing For All of Us), approved on January 26, 2022, and through ongoing work in tandem with multiplex to simplify RS zones. <i>Lead: Planning, Urban Design &amp; Sustainability (Community Planning)</i></p> <p><b>Areas for Exploration in Phase 2:</b></p> <p><b>Areas for Exploration 1:</b> Review and assess how the City's existing regulations and policies including the Vancouver Building By-law and Zoning and Development By-law, align with the upcoming changes to the BC Building Code to advance accessibility.</p> <p><b>Areas for Exploration 2:</b> Work with the disability community and community housing sector to explore how to increase the number of accessible units provided within new social and supportive housing projects and how to prioritize those units for people with disabilities.</p> <p><b>Areas for Exploration 3:</b> Work across departments and with the disability community to identify the most impactful actions for advocacy to Provincial and Federal levels of government and prioritize these in the City's housing advocacy work.</p>
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**EXAMPLE OF ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY**

*Note: While the actions below are not currently prioritized for the proposed work plan, they are noted here for future consideration by the Accessibility Committee and staff as work progresses.*

- Accessible path of travel: To provide visibility in our housing situations which would mean accessible paths to one or more entrances of a housing unit.
- More options for transition from shelters to supported/addiction services, transition into mixed income housing.
- More awareness about what is available in the city or what could help them in order to get them better housing or better technology or better funding or home support.
- Housing that meets the needs of families that have people with disabilities in them - having accessible pathways
- Housing options ranging across from supported housing to regular market rentals or to purchase that have basic accessibility built-in.
- Better funding for co-op housing, subsidized housing and increasing the amount of accessible subsidized housing in Vancouver.
- Ensuring that accessible is actually accessible and understanding that there are different types of accessibility. Not just creating one accessible housing model. There are people, who aren't in wheelchairs that still need accessibility within the home. There are people with wheelchairs. Making sure that there are multiple versions of accessible subsidized housing.
- Consider ways that property tax exemptions could encourage people who are making legal income suites accessible. Many people who aren't in the low income segment or are, but can't get low-income accessible housing, would happily live in a legal basement suite if it was accessible or somewhat accessible. But there's no way to encourage homeowners to do that. There is no lever that makes that worthwhile.

**4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS**  
**Goal: The City of Vancouver provides accessible information to connect and engage with persons with disabilities by providing communication supports, accessible websites, formats and digital content.**

<b>COMMUNITY PRIORITIES</b>	<b>CITY ACTIONS UNDERWAY AND IN DEVELOPMENT</b>
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<sup>32</sup> Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for eligible BC residents who are age 60 or over

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To use City information, communication and engagement tools to create awareness about di To use City information, communication and engagement tools to create awareness about disabilities, reducing attitudinal barriers, and the importance of accessibility and accessible principles and practices</li><li>• To offer resources to support organizations to make their meetings or events accessible to all people</li><li>• To provide information in multiple accessible versions and languages both in digital and offline formats</li><li>• To provide in-person information sharing and communication support for people with disabilities that engage with the City</li><li>• To create awareness campaigns broadly across the City on the accessibility related experiences and challenges faced by people with disabilities and other equity-denied groups</li><li>• To develop and mandate accessible communication standards across City groups for information and communication materials</li><li>• To review and improve wayfinding systems so that they meet the needs of people with disabilities.</li></ul>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> Advocate for plain language principles in all published print and digital/social content where CEC is involved in creation and review. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications; Technology Services (Digital Channels)</i></p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> Add accessibility considerations to standardized CEC communications templates and practices to factor in considerations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ alternative text for any visual social/digital content, in addition to captioning for audio.</li><li>○ plain language for information bulletins, news releases and website copy.</li><li>○ Presuming there will be attendees with accessibility challenges at all events and engagements, with requisite identification of barriers, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mobility - accessible parking, ramps, elevators entries, corridors, washrooms, assistance dog provisions, etc.</li><li>• sensitivities - ventilation, lighting, surfaces, external noise and acoustics, food and beverage allergens, timing of event, etc.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications</i></p> <p><b>Action 3:</b> For engagement events (not organized by CEC), encourage all stakeholders and partners to review and use the <a href="#">Accessible Events Checklist and Resources</a>. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Public Engagement)</i></p> <p><b>Action 4:</b> Use strategic tactics to reach audiences with limited access to the City (e.g. technological barriers or cultural considerations). Supplement communication with offline media (e.g. posters, letters, phone calls, community groups, etc.). <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Communications)</i></p> <p><b>Action 5:</b> Investigate the possibility of multilingual closed captioning for CEC led events. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Communications)</i></p> <p><b>Action 6:</b> Engage and hire external simultaneous interpretation services for larger scale events and projects, as well as for engagements involving complex subjects. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Department Wide)</i></p> <p><b>Action 7:</b> Provide accessibility considerations for people who don't speak English, including plain language translations, ASL or real-time captioning. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Department Wide)</i></p> <p><b>Action 8:</b> Conform to the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines which will make the City's website accessible to the widest possible audience, regardless of technology or ability. <i>Lead: Technology Services (Digital Channels)</i></p> <p><b>Action 9:</b> Create a Language Accessibility Policy - proposing a decision-making tool that considers research and knowledge of community and seeks to create a standard for providing translation and interpretation. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Public Engagement)</i></p> <p><b>Action 10:</b> In consultation with the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) develop an accessible version of the Zoning and Development By-law in a format that meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA or higher. <i>Lead: Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (Citywide and Regional Planning)</i></p>
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	<p><b>Action 11:</b> Building clear information points and perspectives to be shared on VFRS social media platform to support community learning, and to help people to be more proactive in the event of an emergency. <i>Lead: Vancouver Fire Rescue Services</i></p> <p><b>Action 12:</b> Developing more messaging via Public Education offices on all new media campaigns (e.g. Wake Up Vancouver). <i>Lead: Vancouver Fire Rescue Services</i></p> <p><b>Action 13:</b> Represent Fire Services at the Vancouver Abilities Expo. <i>Lead: Vancouver Fire Rescue Services</i></p> <p><b>Action 14:</b> To apply an accessibility lens on all communications events and materials for the municipal elections, including plain language translations, ASL and real-time captioning at electoral events. <i>Lead: City Clerks (Elections Office)</i></p> <p><b>Action 15:</b> Update Emergency Preparedness Public Education and Engagement materials through an accessibility lens. <i>Lead: Vancouver Emergency Management Agency</i></p>
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**EXAMPLE OF ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY**

*Note: While the actions below are not currently prioritized for the proposed work plan, they are noted here for future consideration by the Accessibility Committee and staff as work progresses.*

- Create a symbol (maybe an ear) that identifies establishments that provide accessible communication; similar to the wheelchair sign.
- Increase use of an FM system (Phonic Ear Free Ear Integrated FM receiver) which is a wireless device that helps people hear better in noisy situations.
- Use of a whiteboard available so things can be written down. If working with people who are deafblind, having black or yellow text is easier to see.
- Have audio description available at significant cultural events such as parades and visual displays help bring out those with sight loss
- Have sign language interpreters at meetings, events and so forth.

**5. EMPLOYMENT**  
**Goal: The City of Vancouver increase opportunities for persons with disabilities to contribute to the workforce and commits to supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace for all.**

<b>COMMUNITY PRIORITIES</b>	<b>CITY ACTIONS UNDERWAY AND IN DEVELOPMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To address staff knowledge and understanding of accessibility issues within the workplace through regular equity focused staff training</li> <li>• To evaluate the City's recruitment processes to ensure they are accessible and inclusive so that applicants with a disability can access employment opportunities at the City. Consider alternative hiring practices.</li> <li>• To review and refine the City's accommodation framework so that people with a wide range of disabilities are considered for employment and feel supported to do their duties successfully</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> Document the City's medical accommodation approach and process to ensure the City's duty to accommodate obligations and process are known and available. <i>Lead: Human Resources (Organizational Health &amp; Safety)</i></p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> Create resources, tools and opportunity for staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of accessibility issues within the workplace. <i>Lead: Human Resources (Organizational Development &amp; Strategic Initiatives)</i></p> <p><b>Action 3.</b> Evaluate the City's recruitment processes and procedures to ensure they are equitable and inclusive, with a particular focus on ensuring that applicants with a disability can access employment opportunities at the City. <i>Lead: Human Resources (Recruitment)</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To include mentorship or internship programs as effective interventions for retention</li> <li>• To ensure that all staff in hiring and in supervisory positions have strong knowledge of workplace accommodations so that they can provide support to employees with disabilities.</li> <li>• To identify opportunities for improvement in the City's retention and leadership development processes for employees with disabilities,</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 4:</b> Continue to build understanding of inclusive employment best practice through participation in the Province's President's Group program<sup>33</sup> <i>Lead: Human Resources (Organizational Development &amp; Strategic Initiatives)</i></p> <p><b>Action 5:</b> Continue to develop a comprehensive, progressive, cumulative curriculum and pathway for Justice, Equity, Decolonization, and Inclusion (JEDI) learning. <i>Lead: Equity Office</i></p> <p><b>Action 6:</b> Continue to support Employee Resource Groups (ERG) developed for employees to come together around shared identities and experiences <i>Lead: Equity Office</i></p> <p><b>Action 7:</b> Upgrade the medical accessibility module in First Responder training to a more a more robust and valuable module, that is more in-depth and inclusive. <i>Lead: Vancouver Fire Rescue Services</i></p> <p><b>Action 8:</b> Add a section of Accessibility to the Equity &amp; Inclusion Training in Leadership Program <i>Lead: Vancouver Fire Rescue Services</i></p> <p><b>Action 9:</b> Develop e-learning with voice-over components from community members for a required 'refresher' for all Vancouver Fire and Rescue Service members <i>Lead: Vancouver Fire Rescue Services</i></p> <p><b>Action 10:</b> Review job postings to ensure employment equity and accessibility <i>Lead: Human Resources (Recruitment); Departments</i></p> <p><b>Action 11:</b> Defining accommodation process for City Staff <i>Lead: Human Resources; Equity Office</i></p> <p><b>Action 12:</b> Education and training for senior decision makers <i>Lead: Human Resources (Organizational Development &amp; Strategic Initiatives) and Equity Office</i></p>
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**EXAMPLE OF ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop training curriculum to advance understanding of equity, decolonization, accessibility and inclusion</li> <li>• Explore ways in which people with disabilities can be in leadership positions or have the ability to be promoted or have the opportunity to grow in their positions</li> <li>• Build in a thorough process during the orientation period where people can increase their awareness in the accommodations process and the various supports in place for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Develop an accommodation policy so that the process will be streamlined and be properly embedded within the orientation</li> <li>• Explore different ways to recruit an individual other than the traditional way of interviews or providing a written resume and cover letter.</li> <li>• Build a mentorship or internship program so people with disabilities can build skills and knowledge as a successful way to enter into the workforce</li> </ul>
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**6. GOVERNANCE AND ENGAGEMENT**  
**Goal: Reduce barriers to participation in civic life using an equity-focused approach and provide equitable access to municipal programs and services.**

<b>COMMUNITY PRIORITIES</b>	<b>CITY ACTIONS UNDERWAY AND IN DEVELOPMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that people with a diverse range of experience and different types of disabilities are involved in the development of standards to embed accessibility in the City</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> Review the criteria, dollar amounts and process/mechanism for distributing honorariums, to increase consistent practice across City departments. Honoraria are increasingly used by City</p>

<sup>33</sup> The presidents Group program s a network of 25 change-driven BC business leaders who are champions for more accessible, inclusive workplaces. <https://accessibleemployers.ca/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a customer services standards training for staff that include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities</li> <li>▪ how to use equipment or devices available at the City or otherwise provided by the City to help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability</li> <li>▪ To assist a person with particular type of disability who may be having difficulty in accessing goods, services or facilities</li> <li>▪ how to communicate with a customer with limited English or communication difficulties</li> <li>▪ appropriate and inclusive language to use with non-binary clientele</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To create and disseminate civic engagement tools applying an intersectional accessibility lens</li> <li>• Raise public awareness about accessible services in the City of Vancouver</li> <li>• Incorporate accessibility criteria and features when acquiring or purchasing goods, services or facilities</li> <li>• Coordinate accessibility policies across city services and Civic Boards including the Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, Vancouver School Board.</li> </ul>	<p>staff to acknowledge participants' contributions to City work, and to reduce barriers to participation in civic engagement. Guidelines will help to standardize this process. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Public Engagement)</i></p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> Identify and respond to accessibility considerations during engagement planning (not just in relation to events). <i>Lead: City Clerks (Elections Office); Civic Engagement and Communications</i></p> <p><b>Action 3:</b> For engagement events (not organized by the department), encourage all stakeholders and partners to review and use the <a href="#">Accessible Events Checklist and Resources</a>. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Department Wide)</i></p> <p><b>Action 4:</b> Consider multilingual closed captioning for CEC led events. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Department Wide)</i></p> <p><b>Action 5:</b> Engage and hire external simultaneous interpretation services for larger scale events and projects, as well as for engagements involving complex subjects. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Department Wide)</i></p> <p><b>Action 6:</b> Consider including the provision of non-English spoken languages and plain language translations, ASL, real-time captioning and other accessibility communications supports. <i>Lead: Civic Engagement and Communications (Department Wide)</i></p> <p><b>Action 7:</b> Recognize December 3 – UN International Day for Persons with Disabilities. <i>Lead: City Clerks Office (Corporate Communications)</i></p> <p><b>Action 8:</b> Provide Closed Captioning and ASL interpreters at all City Council meetings and PDAC meetings. <i>Lead: City Clerks Office (Council Operations)</i></p> <p><b>Action 9:</b> Create an online directory in the City of Vancouver Public website listing of accessible services and supports for persons with disabilities. <i>Lead: Technology Services (Digital Channels); Arts Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 10:</b> Provide easy access to City services and information in a variety of languages through interpretation services via 3-1-1 call center. <i>Lead: Technology Services (Digital Channels)</i></p> <p><b>Action 11:</b> In consultation with PDAC and community organizations that support people with disabilities, implement design principles to facilitate voter engagement in the electoral process. <i>Lead: City Clerks Office (Elections Office)</i></p> <p><b>Action 12:</b> Apply an accessibility lens to emergency response and recovery plans to centre the needs of persons with disabilities in disasters and emergencies. <i>Lead: Vancouver Emergency Management Agency</i></p>
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**EXAMPLE OF ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY**

*Note: While the actions below are not currently prioritized for the proposed work plan, they are noted here for future consideration by the Accessibility Committee and staff as work progresses.*

- Flexibility to accommodate a variety of access needs defined broadly.

- Customer Service: Police and firemen and first responders and the receptionists that you speak to need to have training and education around removing attitudinal barriers.
- having free or complimentary programs, certain ones or availabilities or parks that can be complimentary or free
- Having audio description being available at fairly significant cultural like parades or outdoor events or parties or visual displays can be really important to help bring out those with sight loss.
- Social Isolation/Social Inclusion: There is not yet a really strong strategy, one, for identifying people that are socially isolated and knowing where they are or inviting them to participate or being included.
- Take into consideration the different levels of income and that levels of service are available to all communities.
- Included in Decision-Making: Those who are in need, should know, they are considered into the decisions that are being made, as well as in the decision-making process; they are the ones that are usually overlooked , just consider them in the process.
- would be helpful to have your questions in advance so everyone could thoughtfully think about and really think about how we can contribute to the conversation in a more meaningful away, become more thoughtfully involved.

## 7. CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION

**Goal:** Together with non-profit organizations and persons with disabilities, build capacity and awareness to increase collaboration in the sector and address accessibility challenges in the community.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	CITY ACTIONS UNDERWAY AND IN DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide core funding to organizations working with people with disabilities, seniors and those with lived experience of mental health challenges and / or substance use</li> <li>• Fund networks that bring together community groups and people with lived experiences to engage in collaborative planning and coordination of services among organizations that provide services to seniors, people with disabilities and people experiencing mental health and substance use challenges</li> <li>• Integrate the leadership and participation of the disability community and collaborate with partners and stakeholders to ensure accessibility and the rights and needs of persons with disabilities are central to policy and program development and delivery.</li> <li>• Promote accessibility standards among community groups</li> <li>• Support volunteer and mentorship programs within the City and community organizations</li> <li>• Work together with the non-profit sector to advocate for the rights of people living with disabilities including seniors and people with lived experience of mental health challenges and/or substance use.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> Continue to provide support to organizations serving persons with disabilities through space, grants and investments in network building and strategic funding for growth and capacity building. <i>Lead: Arts Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> Co-convene a cross-disability network/coalition in the city to support collective efforts to advance accessibility and inclusion by acting on recommendations from all relevant stakeholders. <i>Lead: Arts Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 3:</b> Work with BC Housing, non-profit operators, and persons with disabilities who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness to identify changes that will improve accessibility in temporary shelters. <i>Lead: Arts Culture and Community Services (Housing and Homelessness Services)</i></p> <p><b>Action 4:</b> Support the non-profit sector to create a peer-led knowledge hub to address mental health and substance use stigma in the health and social service sector. <i>Lead: Arts Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 5:</b> Promote the importance of including people with mental health challenges and lived experience of substance use in collaborations to address accessibility challenges <i>Lead: Arts Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 6:</b> Through the <i>Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver Social Infrastructure Strategy</i>, consider and support social non-profit space needs and service gaps, or prioritizing organizations that serve seniors, people with disabilities and people experiencing mental health and substance use challenges. <i>Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)</i></p> <p><b>Action 7:</b> In alignment with <i>Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver Social Infrastructure Strategy</i>, continue to work with the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC) to address access to space for the Urban Indigenous population with disabilities. <i>Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)</i></p>



**Action 8:** For City-owned facilities and spaces, improve and adjust operator selection processes to improve equitable access to funds, by prioritizing social nonprofits that serve people with seniors, people with disabilities and people experiencing mental health and substance use challenges.

*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)*

**Action 9:** Seek new/increased Capital Grant funding to support social-serving non-profits to plan for renovation or maintenance of their spaces, with a focus on accessibility, and access to emergency funding.

*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)*

**Action 10:** Work with the Vancouver Emergency Management Agency (VEMA) to identify space solutions and work with Neighborhood Houses and community networks to ensure accessible spaces for persons with disabilities are in operational during emergencies such as heat domes and other climate change events.

*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)*

**Action 11:** Prioritize organizations serving people with disabilities for grants and departmental funding.

*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Cultural Services)*

**Action 12:** Provide support for organizations to access or deliver learning opportunities that strengthens and enhances sectoral knowledge and supports equity deserving art and cultural leaders or to support non-equity mandated organizations in their path to becoming more equitable.

*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Cultural Services)*

**Action 13:** Hire a Cultural Equity and Accessibility planner to develop and deliver programs on equity and accessibility while providing pathways into ongoing support.

*Lead: Arts Culture and Community Services (Cultural Services)*

**Action 14:** Provide grant support for organizations to make spaces accessible, including improvements and upgrades

*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Cultural Services)*

**Action 15:** Work with the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee to convene focus groups with people with disabilities to inform departmental policy e.g. Culture|Shift and the commemoration policy.

*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Cultural Services)*

**Action 16:** Open departmental training opportunities on Trauma Informed Practice for all Cultural Services employees.

*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Cultural Services)*

**EXAMPLE OF ACTIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY**

*Note: While the actions below are not currently prioritized for the proposed work plan, they are noted here for future consideration by the Accessibility Committee and staff as work progresses.*

- Provide funding for community centres, funding for seniors groups, funding for non-profits.
- Consult with other organizations and people with a large variety of disabilities



- Partnering with self-advocacy community to develop and lead sensitivity and awareness training to City staff
- Promote better integration and stronger collaboration between the city and non-profit organizations
- ongoing collaboration with the disability community and organizations and not putting the onus on disabled people to move things that they can't move
- More accessible communication from the government and collaboration with the disability community
- Accessibility has a lot to do with having the opportunity to participate as well as the opportunity to develop a sense of agency about how an individual participates – volunteering and mentoring opportunities
- Have more strategic planning activities with the sector

## 8. ADVOCACY AND WORKING WITH OTHER ORDERS OF GOVERNMENT ALONG WITH OTHER AGENCIES

**GOAL:** Work in integrated and collaborative ways with all other orders of government so that persons with disabilities are able to move, lead, participate, and contribute in their communities.

### COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- To build a culture where everybody has a role to play in advocating for increased accessibility and inclusion
- To share community engagement recommendations with the other levels of government and partner affiliations.
- To work alongside persons with disabilities and the community on advocacy efforts with the provincial, federal and regional governments

### CITY ACTIONS UNDERWAY AND IN DEVELOPMENT

**Action 1:** Working with the provincial government to ensure that the City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy aligns with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*  
*Lead: Equity Office*

**Action 2:** Piloting the Reduced Fare Transit Pilot Study, providing free 1-zone transit passes to 100 individuals to better understand the impacts transit has on other social determinants of health.  
*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)*

**Action 3:** Apply a Disability Lens to the City's poverty reduction work.  
*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)*

**Action 4:** Working with community partners to advocate for better access to early learning and childcare services for children with disabilities. This would include advocating for increased funding levels to support families in childcare settings, e.g., through a new and improved model of Inclusion Contracts), increased investment in inclusion training for the Early Childhood Educator workforce, and better wraparound supports for families.  
*Lead: Arts, Culture and Community Services (Social Policy)*

**Action 5:** Advancing design guidelines and improving regional consistency for accessibility requirements at bus stops. This includes participating in regional discussions with other municipalities and TransLink to update the Bus Infrastructure Design Guidelines or Provincial design guidelines, for topics such as integration of bus stops and bike facilities, tactile warning surface indicators, and signage / information at bus stops.  
*Lead: Engineering Services (Transit Integration & Projects Branch and Transportation Design Branch)*

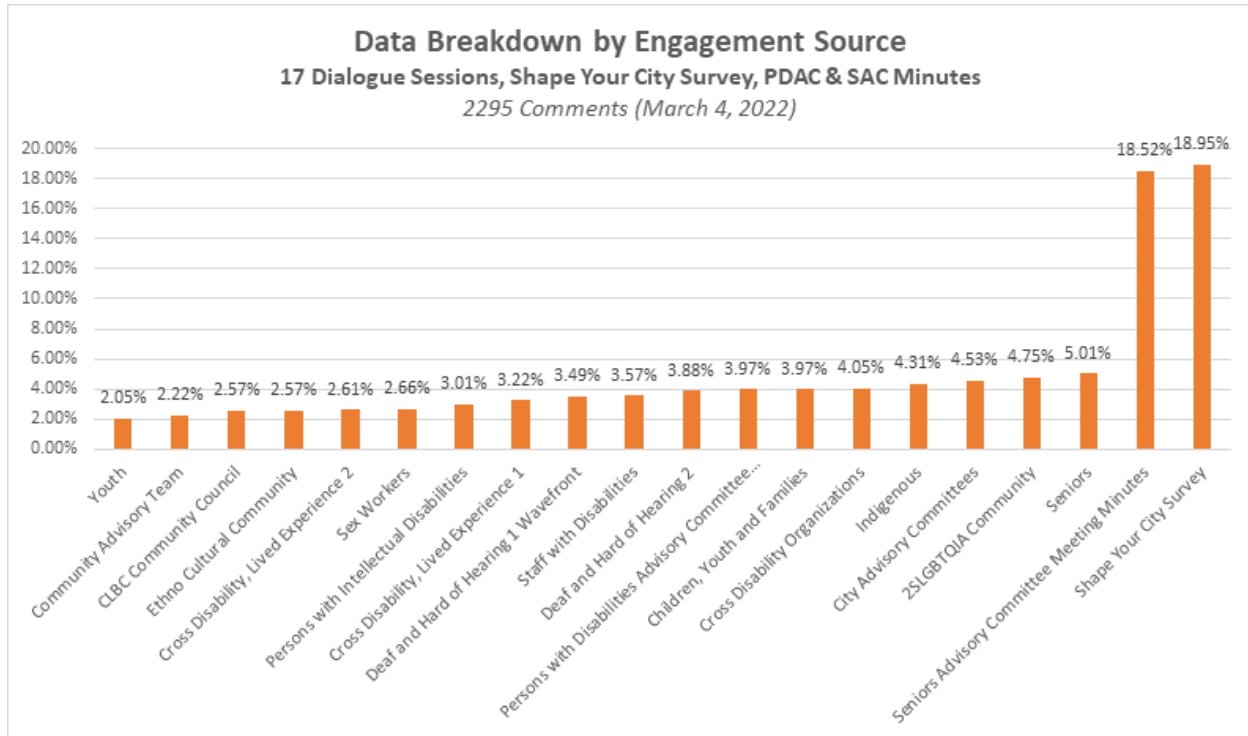
**Action 6:** Addressing accessibility issues in TransLink and Provincial rapid transit station designs, guidelines and requirements. This includes advocating and working with TransLink to update their Transit Passenger Facility Design Guidelines as well as with the Province in implementing their Accessibility BC Plan.

*Lead: Engineering Services (Transit Integration & Projects Branch)*

**Action 7:** Work with Arts, Culture, and Community Services to advocate for ongoing inter-governmental coordination to support persons with disabilities during disasters and emergencies.

*Lead: Vancouver Emergency Management Agency*

## Appendix 7 Breakdown of Voices Heard by Community along with our Advisory Committees

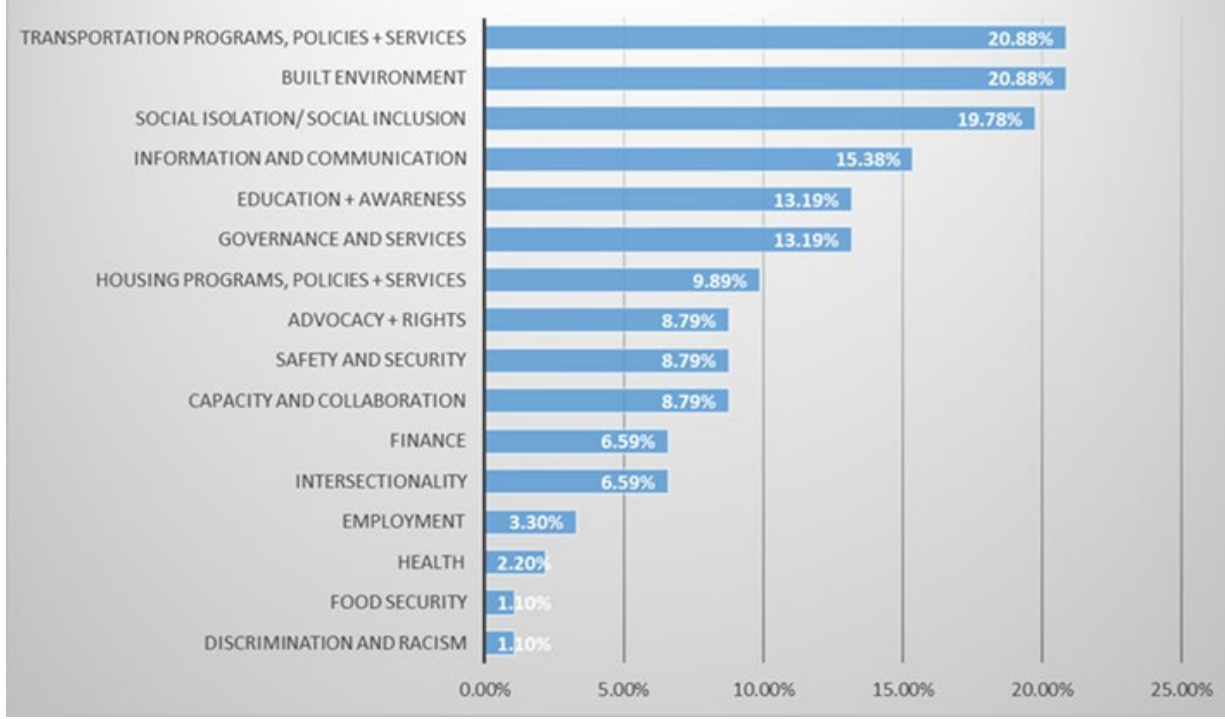


Community engagement included reviewing

- the past seven years of meeting minutes of both Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC)
- hosting 17 virtual community dialogues
  - Community Action Team
  - Youth with disabilities
  - Immigrants and Refugees with disabilities
  - Sex Works
  - 2 dialogues for persons with disabilities
  - City Staff with disabilities
  - 2 for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community
  - Children, Youth, and Families
  - Indigenous Community
  - Seniors
  - City Advisory Council Committees
  - Community Living BC Vancouver Council
  - Persons with Intellectual Disabilities
  - Staff from Disability Organizations
- Shape Your City

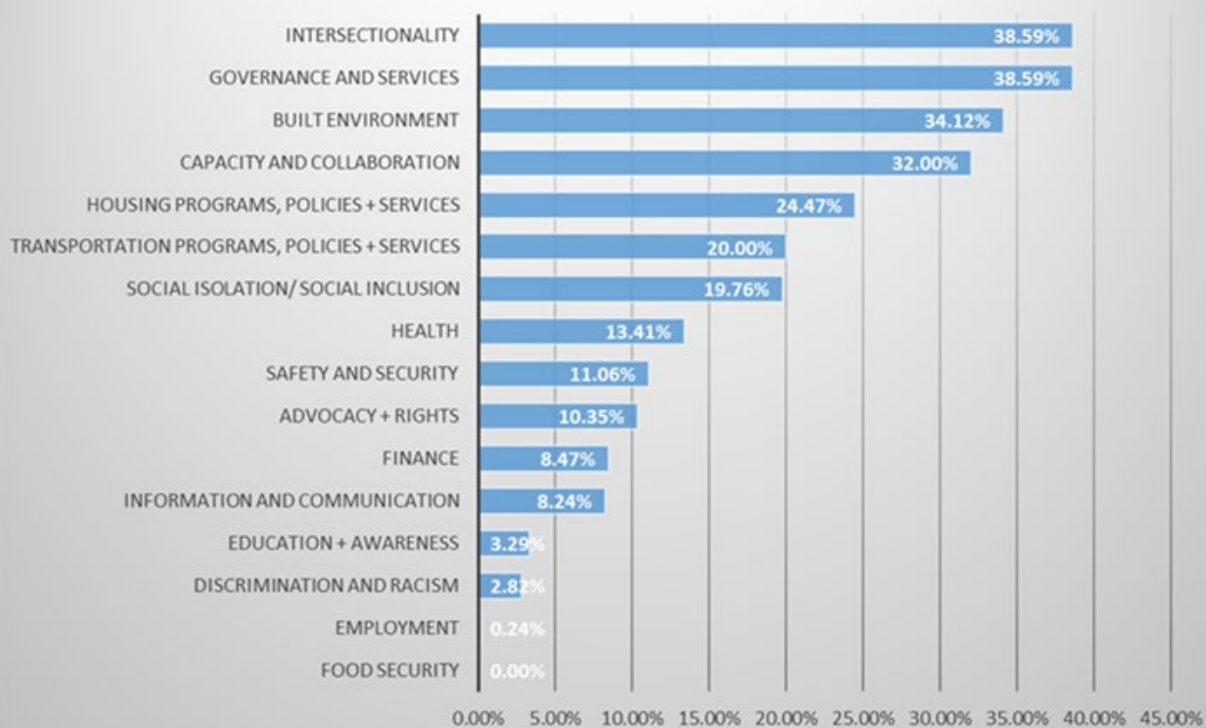
## Existing & Emerging Accessibility Themes

91 Comments Pulled from PDAC Minutes (March 4, 2022)



## Existing & Emerging Accessibility Themes

425 Comments pulled from SAC minutes (March 4, 2022)



## APPENDIX B

### **Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and Seniors Advisory Committee Motions in support of *Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy***

**The following is a motion passed by the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee at its Special Meeting on May 19, 2022, and is provided in advance of the minutes being circulated to Mayor and Council and published to the web:**

#### **Accessibility Strategy**

MOVED by Salina Dewar

SECONDED by Chris Morrissey

WHEREAS over many years and numerous presentations, it has become abundantly clear to the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) that there is a substantial need for the City of Vancouver to implement an Accessible Strategy so that all of the City's built environment, as well as all City policies, programs and services are administered through an accessibility lens, thus identifying and eliminating barriers to full inclusion in city life for persons of all abilities; and

WHEREAS society has exhibited, through federal (Accessible Canada Act) and provincial (Accessible British Columbia Act) legislation, as well as the adoption of accessibility strategies in other jurisdictions (e.g., Victoria, Calgary, Winnipeg, St. Catherines, Toronto) the need to promote inclusion and equity for persons with disabilities through accessible built environments, policies, programs and services and the simultaneous removal of barriers preventing full participation of persons with disabilities in civic life; and

WHEREAS there is a diversity of persons with disabilities, which include but are not limited to age, race, gender, gender identity and expression, Indigenous identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, varying economic status (including poverty), as well as parents with disabilities; and

WHEREAS on September 18, 2018, Vancouver City Council directed staff to work with an Accessibility Task Force formed of members with experience on PDAC, the Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC), as well as the former People with Lived Experience Advisory Committee on Mental Health and Substance Use (since terminated), to develop Phase 1 of an accessible city strategy; and

WHEREAS PDAC and SAC have worked tirelessly to assist the Task Force with the development of Phase 1 of the Strategy, despite numerous delays; and

WHEREAS on May 5, 2022, City staff presented a draft "Transforming Attitudes, Imbedding Change; The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1)" to PDAC, which resulted in comments and concerns from PDAC with respect to several issues pertaining to this report, including the accountability framework, the timeliness of the

development of Phase 2 and various other suggestions toward clarification and strengthening this initiative; and

WHEREAS PDAC recognizes the draft "Transforming Attitudes, Imbedding Change; The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1)" as a good first step toward making the City of Vancouver a more inclusive and equitable place for all to live, work and play, *AND THAT* the momentum which has been achieved to date in this regard must be maintained and intensified in order to preserve the credibility of the process leading to the adoption of the Strategy;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT PDAC endorses the draft "Transforming Attitudes, Imbedding Change; The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1)", with the understanding that the following concerns will be addressed in Phase 2:

- a. Phase 2 will recognize the accessibility needs of children with disabilities, to ensure that the interests of persons with disabilities from birth to death are represented within this strategy.
- b. The proposed accountability framework will be robust and structured in a way that the credibility and success of this initiative is ensured. Specifically, the accountability framework must promote transparency to the public through proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and assign responsibilities and accountabilities to City staff who themselves are responsible for the implementation of the Strategy. PDAC recommends that the City report to the public annually and consult with PDAC on a regular basis as to the status of the implementation of this Strategy.
- c. It is imperative to maximize the potential for this Strategy's success that the current momentum developed in Phase 1 be maintained throughout Phase 2 and reasonable and tight timelines must be adhered to, to ensure the timely implementation of this Strategy. PDAC recommends that Phase 2 be concluded and presented to Council within 18 months of Council's approval of Phase 1.
- d. The language of the Strategy should be progressive, founded upon the principle of "nothing about us without us" and with the goal of empowering persons with disabilities. The language and the imagery of the report should recognize the strengths and the value of the lived experiences and emphasize the agency of diverse people (2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous Peoples, People of Colour, and People of various Genders and Ages) with visible and invisible disabilities, instead of portraying people with disabilities as passive and lacking. The script of the report should be in plain language, with difficult concepts, such as intersectionality, explained clearly through specific examples.
- e. In order to confirm the City's commitment to inclusivity, equity and the removal of barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities, it is crucial for the City to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to meet and fulfill all commitments and responsibilities bestowed upon City staff, arising from this Strategy. This, in turn, will go a long way to confirm the trust persons with disabilities must have in the City's commitment to a timely implementation and full and transparent monitoring of the Strategy. Phase 2 will require transformative changes across city



departments, using a disability lens, to achieve the maximum potential for this Strategy.

- f. Phase 2 must recognize the diversity of persons with disabilities and their diverse circumstances and needs.
- g. Given the persisting challenges in ensuring that proper accessible housing is built within the City, resources should be allocated to recruit and hire a permanent Accessible Housing Specialist, preferably a qualified person with a disability who has applicable lived experience.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**The following are motions passed by the Seniors' Advisory Committee at its meeting on May 20, 2022, and are provided in advance of the minutes being circulated to Mayor and Council and published to the web:**

**2. Motion to Approve Accessibility Strategy Report**

MOVED by Andrea Sara  
SECONDED by Dale Lutes

THAT the Seniors' Advisory Committee support the Report "Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1)."

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

## APPENDIX C

### Research and Engagement on Off-Street Accessible Parking For the Full Report, contact the Engineering Services

#### Executive Summary

In response to the identified priority action in the updates to *Parking By-law* in 2018, staff have undertaken engagement and research efforts to understand the needs of people with disabilities and those of an aging population.

First, a questionnaire was conducted with almost 1,000 respondents from people in the accessibility community. The results indicated the following:

- **Demographics** – All age groups were well represented with a significant proportion of those responding being aged 60 or older.
- **Mobility** – Approximately 85% identified as having a disability and mobility challenge, or additional needs that make travelling outside of the home more difficult or complex, or that limit their ability to travel. Approximately 70% relied on a mobility device. Walking aids and wheeled mobility devices represented approximately 25% and 40% of mobility device usage respectively.
- **Accessible vehicle modification** – Driver or passenger side ramp/lift, hand control, steps, left-foot acceleration/brake control, rear wheelchair ramp/lift, or additional handrails are some of the accessibility modifications to a vehicle. Side ramps and lifts represented roughly 10% of the vehicle modifications.
- **Top helpful improvements identified by respondents** – Additional designated accessible parking on-street and in buildings, reduced slopes in parkades, provision of seating for pick-up/drop-off areas, and more pick-up/drop-off spaces.

Second, a consultant conducted a literature review comparing the City's current accessible parking design standard (i.e. 5.5 m long by 4 m wide by 2.3 m high) with other published documents:

- **Metro-Vancouver** – Vancouver's current minimum design standard is within range of other municipalities within Metro Vancouver.
- **Other major municipalities in Canada** – Vancouver's minimum design standard is on the smaller size in terms of width. However, Vancouver requires the highest minimum height clearance out of the other four (4) major municipalities for accessible parking.
- **Other publications, acts, and design guidelines** – Vancouver's minimum design standard falls within the typical range in terms of both stall length and width. However, Vancouver requires the lowest height clearance of 2.3 m where 2.75 m is the most common.

Third, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) and the City co-hosted a design charrette where participants with mobility devices tested various accessible parking layouts. Some highlights from the design charrette findings included:

- An ideal accessible parking space should have a wide access aisle, flat surface, and clear signage and markings.

- The current City of Vancouver standard is adequate for some people using a wheelchair, but not all.
- Side-loading vehicles require additional clearance to deploy the ramp or lift, plus landing space for the wheelchair user to maneuver.

Finally, through interviews conducted by a consultant and feedback received from Vancouver residents, the following key issue was identified:

- Accessible parking spaces are typically assigned upon occupancy of the building, and then remain tied to that strata unit for a long time. As strata units change ownership, and the accessibility needs of residents change, those accessible spaces are not functionally able to be re-assigned based on user need.

As a result of the above information, the following changes to the *Parking By-law* are recommended:

- Addition of van-accessible design standards:
  - The dimensions would be 5.5 m (L) x 5 m (W) x 2.3 m (H), 1 m wider than the current accessible parking space
    - This could also be marked as 5.5 m (L) x 3.5 m + 1.5 m shared access aisle (W) x 2.3 m (H)
  - One (1) van-accessible for every ten (10) accessible parking space, with the first space being van-accessible.
  - Signs at van-accessible spaces shall include the additional phrase “Van-Accessible”.
- A surface with no more than 2% grade (1:50 slope) should be provided at the parking space. A maximum grade of 5% (1:20 slope) is permitted due to hardship at the discretion of the Director of Planning, in consultation with the City Engineer.
- In a strata-titled development, all accessible parking spaces should be held in common ownership and be made available to accessible parking permit holders to meet the changing needs of residents over time.

## APPENDIX D

### A By-law to amend Parking By-law No. 6059 Regarding Accessible Parking

BY-LAW NO. \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, in public meeting, enacts as follows:

1. This By-law amends the indicated provisions of the Parking By-law No. 6059.
2. Council amends section 2 by adding the following new definition in the correct alphabetical order:

**“Van Accessible Space** means an accessible parking space that provides additional width to accommodate vehicles equipped with ramps or lifts;”
3. In subsection 4.8.1(c), Council:
  - (a) in clause (ii), adds “, except that van accessible parking spaces must be at least 5.0 metres wide” after “be at least 4.0 metres wide”;
  - (b) renumbers clauses (iii) and (iv) as clauses (iv) and (v), respectively; and
  - (c) adds a new clause (iii) as follows:

“(iii) have a level surface with no more than 2% grade, except that the Director of Planning, in consultation with the City Engineer, may permit a steeper grade, up to a maximum of 5%;”.
4. In section 4.8.4, Council adds a new paragraph before “The Director of Planning, in consultation with the City Engineer, is to determine the location of all accessible parking spaces.”, as follows:

“The first accessible parking space provided, plus every tenth accessible parking space provided, must be a van accessible parking space.”
5. Council adds a new section 4.16 as follows:

**“4.16 Common Ownership of Accessible Parking Spaces**

4.16.1 In a strata titled development, accessible parking spaces:

  - (a) must be held in common ownership; and
  - (b) must not be assigned to any strata lot.”.
6. A decision by a court that any part of this By-law is illegal, void, or unenforceable severs that part from this By-law, and is not to affect the balance of this By-law.
7. This By-law is to come into force and take effect on the date of its enactment.



