



COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: January 28, 2025

From: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: **Presentation of the City of West Kelowna's Accessibility & Inclusion Plan**

Report Prepared by: Melissa Hunt-Anderson, Community & Social Development Coordinator

RECOMMENDATION to Consider and Resolve:

THAT Council endorse the City's Accessibility & Inclusion Plan as presented;

AND THAT Staff be directed to prepare a resolution for SILGA, advocating for Provincial Funding for implementation of Provincially mandated Accessibility and Inclusion Plans.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Invest in Infrastructure – We will invest in building, improving and maintaining infrastructure to meet the needs of, and to provide a high quality of life for, current and future generations.

Pursue Economic Growth and Prosperity – We will work with stakeholders throughout the region to advocate for and support efforts aimed at helping West Kelowna businesses prosper. With a focus on the future, we will advance opportunities to expand our economy, increase employment, and develop the community in ways that contribute towards prosperity for all.

Strengthen Our Community – We will provide opportunities for the residents of West Kelowna to build connections, celebrate successes, embrace the community's strengths and diversity, address shared needs, and contribute to shaping the community's future.

Foster Safety and Well-Being – We will pursue through direct action, advocacy, and collaboration with local and regional service providers, investments in community health, needs-based housing, emergency preparedness, policing, and other services that foster safety and well-being in West Kelowna.

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2023, the City of West Kelowna established the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC) in accordance with the Accessible B.C. Act. The AIC Council

Committee aims to unite community members and organizations to collaborate with municipal staff on initiatives that discuss, develop, improve, promote, and sustain community accessibility and inclusion. This effort focuses on reducing and removing accessibility barriers, prioritizing the experiences of individuals with diverse abilities, and fostering an inclusive community.

The AIC's priority was to assist in the creation of the City's inaugural accessibility and inclusion plan, along with a feedback mechanism designed to enhance and expand accessibility options throughout the City of West Kelowna.

DISCUSSION

Key Goals and Actions of Accessibility & Inclusion Plan:

The Accessibility and Inclusion Plan outlines goals and actions for the City to pursue over the next three years (2025-2028). The **Three Goals** support the review of existing and future accessibility needs for the City:

1. Embed Accessibility and Inclusion into the Culture of the City of West Kelowna
2. Review Existing and Future City Plans and Capital Projects with an Accessibility Lens
3. Conduct Audits of Accessibility and Inclusiveness and develop subsequent Actions in the nine following areas:
 - a. **Transportation**
 - b. **Facilities**
 - c. **Parks & Trails**
 - d. **Communications & Engagement**
 - e. **Emergency Planning & Response**
 - f. **Recreation & Culture**
 - g. **Policy**
 - h. **Human Resources & Staff Education**
 - i. **Development & Building Services**

The primary reason for the City to focus on audits across different departments stems from the community engagement conducted in April 2024, which only captured the perspectives of 0.3% of the community (111 people). The City recognizes that to implement meaningful change, a comprehensive review of existing accessibility and inclusion measures, as well as identification of gaps, is necessary. The City aims to collaborate with experts in various fields to ensure that the changes and enhancements made are significant and impactful.

The final document has been prepared without tables, charts, or graphs, and includes limited photographs to ensure accessibility for individuals with visual impairments and to ensure compliance with all accessibility standards, making it readable via screen readers.

Next Steps:

The plan recognizes the City of West Kelowna's commitment to working with individuals with disabilities, utilizing an accessibility lens to foster a sustainable and inclusive culture. Implementation of the plan will need to consider staff resources, time, and financial capacities while addressing the recommendations outlined in the three goals and subsequent actions. By prioritizing accessibility across communications, services, planning, programming, and policies, the City demonstrates its commitment to equality, dignity, and justice for all.

Updated AIC Terms of Reference:

With the City's Accessibility & Inclusion Plan now ready to move into an implementation phase, the Legislative Services team will collaborate with the AIC staff liaison to draft a new terms of reference for the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee, detailing their role in supporting staff in achieving the outlined goals and actions. The updated terms of reference will consider the Accessibility & Inclusion Plan timeline, staff and financial resources, interdepartmental collaboration, and established workplan capacity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Accessibility and Inclusion Plan was developed with a \$10,000 grant from Disability Alliance BC, which funded the hiring of a consultant to work with the AIC and City staff.

To begin implementing the three goals of the Plan, significant funding, resources, and staff commitment will be required. The City has successfully applied for a \$25,000 Age-friendly Communities grant to conduct an Active Accessible Transportation Audit. Additionally, City staff are actively seeking further funding opportunities to support the additional eight audits outlined in the Plan.

Additional funding to action the plan has been recommended in the 2025 10-year Capital Plan beginning in 2026, which identifies \$51,500 towards each accessibility audit (S5.2), along with an additional \$51,500 annually for accessibility projects (S5.3).

CONCLUSION

The establishment of the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC) marks a significant step forward for the City of West Kelowna in fostering a community that is accessible and inclusive for individuals of all abilities. Through the creation of the Accessibility and Inclusion Plan, the City has set forth clear goals and actions that will guide the City over the coming years. By embedding accessibility and inclusion into the City's culture, reviewing existing policies with an accessibility lens, and conducting comprehensive audits, the City is taking proactive measures to identify and address barriers faced by individuals in the community.

The collaborative effort among community members, organizations, and municipal staff is essential to the successful implementation of this Plan. The commitment to securing and allocating budget funding and resources demonstrates the City's dedication to

enhancing accessibility initiatives, which will ultimately benefit all residents. As the City moves forward, effective communication and collaboration will be key in advancing these objectives.

With a solid foundation in place and a comprehensive approach to accessibility and inclusion, West Kelowna is poised to create a more equitable environment that promotes the dignity and well-being of all its citizens. The commitment to equality, dignity, and justice will significantly contribute to a vibrant, inclusive community where everyone can participate fully in all aspects of life.

COUNCIL REPORT / RESOLUTION HISTORY

Date	Report Topic / Resolution	Resolution No.
June 13, 2023	THAT Council approves the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee's Terms of Reference as amended; THAT Council directs staff to seek the new Accessibility and Inclusion Committee's membership through means of public advertisements and recruitment; and THAT Council directs staff to bring the list of volunteers back to Council for appointment of the members	June 13, 2023

Alternate Recommendation to Consider and Resolve:

THAT Council direct staff to review the Accessibility & Inclusion Plan and make the recommended amendments as directed by Council.

REVIEWED BY

Brent Magnan, Director of Community Development

Warren Everton, Director of Finance/CFO

Trevor Seibel, Deputy CAO/Deputy Corporate Officer

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

PowerPoint: Yes No

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Final Accessibility & Inclusion Plan

Attachment 2: Feedback Summary Report