

# City of West Kelowna Accessibility & Inclusion Plan 2025 - 2028



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# MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL

## Our Accessibility Story

The formation of the City of West Kelowna’s Accessibility and Inclusion Committee marked a significant milestone in the City’s accessibility journey and fulfilled a key requirement of the Accessibility BC Act. This legislation mandates that organizations establish an Accessibility Committee, develop an accessibility plan, and implement a feedback tool to enhance accessibility efforts. In alignment with this mandate, City Council established the **Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC)** in late 2023.

The purpose of the AIC is to foster collaboration among community members, organizations, and City of West Kelowna staff to discuss, develop, improve, promote, and sustain community accessibility and inclusion. This involves removing barriers related to accessibility, focusing on the experiences of people with disabilities, and fostering a truly inclusive community.

The AIC will advance Council's vision, mission, and strategic priorities aimed at increasing accessibility and inclusivity within our community. The Committee will advise Council on strategies to reduce social, physical, and sensory barriers that hinder individuals from fully participating in all aspects of community life. It is committed to working collaboratively with City staff to identify and eliminate these barriers while prioritizing the needs of individuals with disabilities and incorporating broader community perspectives.

Together, we aspire to create a more inclusive and accessible environment, building a community that is welcoming, supportive, and empowering for everyone, where all individuals can thrive!





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Acknowledgement of Key Contributors

The City of West Kelowna extends its heartfelt gratitude to the members of the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC) for their unwavering dedication, expertise, and invaluable insights shaped by their lived experiences. Over the past 12 months, the Committee has worked closely with City staff and our AIC Consultant, Spring Hawes, to develop a comprehensive Accessibility and Inclusion Plan. This Plan reflects a co-creation process involving extensive consultation with AIC members and meaningful community engagement.

We greatly appreciate and commend the exceptional contributions of Spring Hawes, the AIC's Ableism Consultant, whose expertise and guidance were instrumental in shaping the final plan. Together, we have taken significant strides toward fostering a more inclusive and accessible community for all residents.

Thank you for your commitment and collaboration in this vital initiative:

- **Rusty Ensign** (AIC Chair), Community Member
- **Melissa Grassmick**, Inclusive Playground Consultant
- **Karen Hartwick**, Community Member
- **Candice Henriques**, arc programs
- **Danielle Needham**, BGC Okanagan
- **Sonia Newman**, Westside Health Network Society
- **Vittoria Spindor**, Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

The City would also like to recognize the financial and resource support from [Disability Alliance BC \(DABC\)](#), which were important components in supporting the development of the City's Accessibility & Inclusion Plan.

## Territorial Acknowledgement

*We acknowledge that the City of West Kelowna is gathered on the traditional territory of the syilx/Okanagan Peoples.*

## ACRONYMS

- AIC Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (City of West Kelowna)
- ASL American Sign Language
- CNIB Canadian Institute for the Blind
- JBMAC Johnson Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre
- RDCO Regional District of Central Okanagan
- RFP Request for Proposal
- WFN Westbank First Nation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of West Kelowna Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2025 – 2028 outlines a pathway for building an accessible community where everyone can fully participate in the spaces, processes, and activities of their everyday lives - both now and in the future of our growing Okanagan community.

This plan is ambitious and concrete, providing numerous opportunities for the City of West Kelowna to showcase efforts that align with the Accessibility Act (2021), implemented across British Columbia. The City is committed to collaborating with people with disabilities and applying an accessibility lens to foster a sustainable and inclusive culture. By prioritizing accessibility in communications, services, planning, programming, and policies, the City of West Kelowna demonstrates its dedication to equality, dignity, and justice for all.

The process of creating this plan began with the formation of an Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC). The Committee collaborated with City staff and Disability Consultant, Spring Hawes, to conduct a visioning process, develop a public engagement survey, and provide input on the plan. The finalized plan was then presented to Mayor and Council for review and adoption before being published on the City's website.

This plan provides an overview of the Accessible BC Act, explains the City of West Kelowna's approach using an accessibility lens, and outlines a path forward for fostering inclusion. It follows the guiding principles of the provincial Accessible BC Act to present the City's actions related to accessibility and inclusion.

The Plan also highlights the foundational commitments made by the City of West Kelowna in building an accessible community. These commitments are reflected in the following three goals:

1. Embedding Accessibility
2. Review of Existing and Future City Plans and Capital Projects
3. Conducting Accessible and Inclusive Audits

These three goals are supported by 28 actions, categorized as Immediate, Short-Term and Long-Term.

Finally, the plan outlines next steps. The City of West Kelowna will publish a high-level implementation plan. This plan will include the identified actions to be addressed, timelines for completion, methods for measuring and reporting progress, and strategies for adjusting actions if needed.

## INTRODUCTION

The City of West Kelowna is gathered on the traditional territory of the syilx/Okanagan Peoples. Situated on the west shore of Okanagan Lake in the Okanagan Valley, the City has an estimated population of 40,715 residents (BC Stats, 2024), with evidence that communities in the area will continue to grow and evolve. West Kelowna is known for its spectacular semi-rural setting, abundant recreational opportunities, convenient shopping, vibrant local markets, and access to municipal programs and services.

The City of West Kelowna partners with Westbank First Nation, the District of Peachland and the Regional District of Central Okanagan to provide regional services such as water management, environmental stewardship, and emergency responses. The City also works closely with these partners to address social and environmental challenges impacting the Central Okanagan.

People are drawn to the Okanagan Valley for its natural beauty and are welcomed by the warmth and hospitality of those who have lived here for generations. Many newcomers choose to settle in the region long-term. People with disabilities expect to

fully participate in community life, feel safe and welcome, and contribute to and sustain the social fabric of West Kelowna's neighbourhoods and neighbouring communities.

## **AN ACCESSIBILITY LENS**

This Accessibility and Inclusion Plan was developed through an accessibility lens, recognizing that equal access is a fundamental aspect of respecting and upholding human rights. Accessibility and the actions we take to remove barriers to access require designing inclusive systems, policies, and infrastructures that enable all individuals to participate equally in societal activities. By prioritizing accessibility, the City of West Kelowna reaffirms its commitment to equality, dignity, and justice for all.

An effective accessibility and inclusion plan recognizes the diverse range of disabilities experienced by individuals and aims to address their unique needs. According to the World Health Organization and Statistics Canada, some of the most prevalent disability conditions include blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, mobility and flexibility disabilities, dexterity challenges, pain-related and injury-related conditions, developmental disabilities, mental health-related disabilities such as PTSD, and memory impairments. Hidden disabilities, which are not immediately visible, such as learning disabilities, also play a significant role in shaping accessibility needs. This plan acknowledges these realities as a foundation for creating an inclusive environment that promotes equity and accessibility for all.

Accessibility ensures that individuals with disabilities can exercise their rights on an equal basis with others. This includes access to education, employment, public services, and social participation. When environments and services are accessible, people with disabilities can fully engage in their communities. They can visit friends in their homes, commute to work, host meetings, babysit their grandchildren, take their children to the playground, age in their own homes, and access the same services and activities as other community members.

## **ABLEISM**

It is important to acknowledge how ableism contributes to inaccessibility because, to create true access and inclusion, ableist belief systems must change.



Ableism is rooted in the idea that people with disabilities are inferior or less capable, which significantly hinders accessibility and inclusion. The ableist beliefs lead to the design of spaces, systems, and policies that prioritize the needs of able-bodied individuals while neglecting or excluding those with disabilities. This can result in physical barriers (such as inaccessible buildings or transportation), digital barriers (like websites that are not screen reader-friendly), and social barriers (such as negative attitudes or assumptions about people's capabilities). Ultimately, ableism limits opportunities for people with disabilities to fully participate in society, undermining true inclusion and equal access for all.

Disability activist Leah Smith defines ableism as “a set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities and often rests on the assumption that disabled people need to be ‘fixed’ in one form or the other. Ableism is intertwined in our culture, due to many limiting beliefs about what disability does or does not mean, how able-bodied people learn to treat people with disabilities and how we are often not included at the table for key decisions.”

## A WAY FORWARD

The creation of the City of West Kelowna Accessibility and Inclusion Plan is driven by the [Accessible BC \(ABC\) Act](#) legislation. Enacted in 2021 by the Government of British Columbia, the act represents a significant advancement in promoting inclusion. It requires public services and facilities to take specific steps towards becoming accessible and safe to individuals with disabilities. The act mandates that prescribed public sector organizations, including municipalities, educational institutions, and health authorities, develop and establish accessibility committees, create and adopt accessibility and inclusion plans such as this one, identify and remove barriers to accessibility, regularly report on their progress, and engage with the community to receive ongoing input about accessibility concerns. Under the ABC Act, the Government of British Columbia is currently developing [accessibility standards](#), which will further inform and guide plans as they are adopted.

In British Columbia, several other key pieces of legislation impact and guide the development and implementation of municipal accessibility and inclusion plans. These include: The British Columbia Human Rights Code, The Local Government Act, The

Community Charter, The Building Act and The Public Health Act (see appendix for links). All of the accessibility legislation efforts in British Columbia are aligned with the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (2019), which in turn are guided by the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (2006). Together, these pieces of legislation shape how municipalities in BC develop and implement their Accessibility and Inclusion Plans to ensure they are inclusive and meet the needs of all residents.

## ENABLERS, ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

### Enablers

Enablers are the conditions, processes and practices (internal or external to the City of West Kelowna) which need to be or are expected to be in place for the desired changes or effects to happen. The following are enablers of this plan:

- Diverse representation across City of West Kelowna departments.
- Commitments and goals in the Accessibility and Inclusion Plan (2025 - 2028) are achieved as expected.
- Senior leadership continues to champion the work outlined in the City of West Kelowna Accessibility and Inclusion Plan (2025 - 2028) and supports the integration of additional actions into this plan.
- City of West Kelowna departments integrate an accessibility lens within their respective strategic plans and across their funding opportunities.

### Assumptions

Assumptions are the beliefs or expectations about the conditions that will be in place or how something will happen. The following are assumptions for this plan:

- The people within the City of West Kelowna accept and are committed to following through with the commitments and goals in this plan.
- City of West Kelowna Mayor and Council, management and staff are aware of accessibility and inclusion. They are appropriately trained to address issues of

access and inclusion at the City of West Kelowna and have the tools to do so, in a variety of ways, with the available resources.

- Accessibility for persons with disabilities is proactive and intentional, rather than reactive or an after-thought.
- Once actions are implemented, the undue burden on persons with disabilities to carry out anti-ableism work, while experiencing ableism, will decrease.

## Risks

Risks are known or unknown elements that may compromise the enablers or assumptions. Plans to mitigate these risks will be included in implementation plans.

The following are risks associated with this plan:

- At the beginning of this work, the burden on persons with disabilities to inform the process may be high.
- Implementing some of the actions outlined in this plan may be hampered by limited resources.

Adapted from "[From Intention to Impact: CIHR Anti-Ableism Action Plan.](#)"

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY OF WEST KELOWNA'S ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE (AIC)

## Background

The City of West Kelowna's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC) was established to bring community members and organizations together to collaborate with municipal staff in discussing, developing, improving, promoting, and sustaining community accessibility and inclusion. This work includes reducing and removing barriers to accessibility, focusing on experiences of people with diverse abilities, lived experiences and AIC Committee members, and fostering an inclusive and welcoming community.

The formation of the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee aligns with the City of West Kelowna Council's Strategic Priorities under the Strengthen Our Community Pillar:

*“Accessibility. We will work to ensure that residents and visitors with different abilities are able to use and enjoy our sidewalks, pathways, parks, trails, facilities, beaches and other attractions. We will work in collaboration with Council’s Accessibility Committee on the provision of an Accessibility and Inclusion Plan for community review.”*

## **AIC Members**

As mandated by the Accessibility BC Act, the Committee membership includes representatives with disabilities or individuals who support people with disabilities or are from organizations that provide such support. Additionally, at least one committee member is an Indigenous person. The Committee is intended to reflect the diversity of people with lived experiences in West Kelowna and provides a diverse cross-disability perspective.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the AIC**

The roles and responsibilities of the AIC include:

- a) Advising on a process for receiving public comments about accessibility.
- b) Establishing and maintaining an Accessibility and Inclusion Plan.
- c) Collaborating to identify and implement initiatives that enhance accessibility and inclusion in the community.
- d) Providing guidance and advice on accessibility within the organization and municipal events including strategies to make operations more inclusive.
- e) Working cooperatively with agencies representing people with disabilities to provide input on matters affecting individuals facing barriers within our community.
- f) Reviewing and making recommendations on referrals from staff, Council, and other committees.
- g) Recognizing that the Committee’s comments and recommendations are part of a broader decision-making process that enables Mayor and Council to fully understand the issues under review, including their policy and budgetary implications and their potential impact on the public.



- h) Investigating funding opportunities to support inclusion and accessibility initiatives.

The first priority of the AIC, as outlined in the Accessibility BC Act, was to work with the City to create an Accessibility and Inclusion Plan aimed at expanding and improving accessibility within West Kelowna. An additional requirement was to develop a feedback mechanism to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility throughout the City.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

### Guiding Principles

The City of West Kelowna, as required by the Accessible BC Act, consulted with its Accessibility and Inclusion Committee and considered the following principles in the creation of the Accessibility and Inclusion Plan:

- **Inclusion**
- **Adaptability**
- **Diversity**
- **Collaboration**
- **Self-determination** (people choosing and setting their own goals, being involved in life decisions, self-advocating, and working to reach their goals).
- **[Universal Design](#)** (the process of creating services and environments that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, and other characteristics). *Read more: [Universal Design Canada](#).*

These six foundational principles are embedded throughout this plan to ensure that the City of West Kelowna is guided in its accessibility journey by continually engaging with and consulting disabled community members and partner organizations.

## **Involvement and Consultation with the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC)**

The City of West Kelowna's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC) played a vital role in the creation of a practical and actionable Accessibility and Inclusion Plan. The Committee adopted an iterative approach to developing this Plan, following a pattern of engaging, refining, and re-engaging.

The process began with the Committee gathering the input, observances, and priorities from its members through a visioning exercise. During this exercise, members were asked to imagine what a truly inclusive city would look like. Subsequently, the public was invited to provide input through a broader engagement process.

## **Public Engagement**

The City of West Kelowna conducted a public engagement process to gather information, suggestions for improvement, and feedback —both positive and critical— about accessibility in the community.\*

Public input was collected from April 9 to 30, 2024, via a 16-question survey distributed through multiple social media channels and in various formats to ensure accessibility for all participants. The primary goal was to hear from West Kelowna residents and stakeholders to understand the current state of accessibility and identify barriers within the community.

Additionally, the community was encouraged to share their thoughts through an online survey at [OurWK.ca/accessibility](https://www.ourwk.ca/accessibility), where participants could also ask questions and learn more about the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee.

Survey highlights:

- 39% said they would rate the City of West Kelowna's accessibility as okay (43 people).
- 70% said that someone in their family/household has accessibility needs (78 people).

- 41% said either themselves or someone in their household has experienced accessibility barriers at a City facility (46 people).

When asked about what an accessible West Kelowna looks like, participants shared:

- A city for everyone to enjoy.
- A place where all can attend, regardless of abilities.
- Inclusive for anyone with differing abilities whether physical or mental - zero stigma, accessibility built into all future planning.

During this engagement process, key City staff also provided their perspectives on accessibility in relation to their roles. They identified “accessibility wins”, suggested opportunities for improvement, and outlined gaps, limitations, barriers and concerns they observed.

\*A detailed summary of the public engagement can be found in the **What We Heard Report** (Appendix 7).

The feedback received through various channels was synthesized with input from the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC) and translated into actionable recommendations categorized by focus areas. Each Committee member prioritized actions within each focus area, ranking them from one (most important) to ten (less urgent but still important). These rankings were compiled into a master list of priorities for each focus area.

Key City staff were also consulted to assess the feasibility of the recommended actions, identify opportunities, highlight actions that may involve greater complexity, require more time or resources, or present significant challenges.

The AIC reconvened to review staff comments and incorporate this feedback into their final recommendations for key actions to include in the Accessibility and Inclusion Plan. A foundational outcome of this process was the development of accessibility criteria for the review and audit processes, which emerged as a critical action in achieving the goals of this plan.

## Accessibility Criteria

Accessibility criteria refer to specific standards or requirements that must be met to ensure environments, products, services, and communications are usable by individuals with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. These criteria are designed to eliminate barriers and provide equitable access for all users.

The City of West Kelowna Accessibility and Inclusion Plan outlined actions to:

- Co-develop specific accessibility criteria in collaboration with the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee and other experts.
- Incorporate the accessibility criteria into plans, bylaws and policies.
- Include accessibility in the scoring matrix used for decision-making.

These measures will ensure that accessibility improvements undertaken by the City of West Kelowna are thoughtfully designed and effectively meet the needs of as many people with lived experiences as possible.

## GOALS AND KEY ACTIONS

Through this plan, accessibility will become an integral part of the City's practices, evolving from a task-oriented checklist to a fundamental way of doing things. The **28 Key Actions** are centered around **three Goals**, which establish the foundation for a strategic and targeted approach to accessibility. These goals represent the City's foundational commitments to fostering an inclusive community.

While the Committee strongly believes that all **28 Key Actions** are both important and urgent, we acknowledge that time and resource constraints do not allow for all of them to be prioritized immediately. The Committee also recognizes that thoughtful, informed planning is essential to the success of creating a sustainable culture of accessibility and inclusion.

To this end, the key actions have been organized into three timeframes. All actions and their corresponding sub-actions, deemed significant by the Committee, are compiled in a Table of Actions, which is attached as an appendix. Each action in the table is accompanied by an associated outcome, measurable indicators, and the responsible department.



- **Immediate Actions:** Four actions were identified as critical safety concerns requiring attention as soon as possible. The immediate actions align with the Council's Strategic Priority: Foster Safety and Well-being.
- **Short-Term Actions:** Twenty-one actions are designated as short-term, to be addressed within the duration of this three-year plan. These actions primarily focus on cultivating a culture of inclusion at the City, assessing the current state of accessibility, and updating planning documents, bylaws, and policies to integrate accessibility and inclusion into City operations.
- **Long-term Actions:** Thirteen actions are categorized as long-term. These represent logical next steps that can be undertaken once the initial phases are completed.

The success of this Plan relies on the integration of accessibility into ongoing and future projects. Accessibility may sometimes manifest as a distinct and specific project or task (something that we do). However, more often, it involves adapting and enhancing existing processes and plans (how we do something).

## **GOAL ONE:**

- **Embed Accessibility and Inclusion into the Culture of the City of West Kelowna**

### **Objectives of Goal One:**

- Accessibility becomes embedded in City processes.
- Accessibility becomes normalized and operationalized at the City of West Kelowna.
- The City of West Kelowna becomes a leader by establishing a permanent paid position for a Disability, Accessibility & Inclusion leader.

## What We Heard:

- “The lack of understanding or awareness about deaf culture and sign language among staff and others in the City of Kelowna creates significant challenges.”
- “Too often, decisions are made by people or accessibility committees that have zero – minimal knowledge and/or representation from the disability community.”
- “An inclusive City not just related to physical assets but socially as well where everyone is accepted, welcome, heard and understood.”

## KEY ACTIONS

### Short-Term:

- **Action 1** – Support the creation and adoption of a working definition of accessibility and inclusion that is broad, inclusive, and intersectional.
  - **Action 1a** – Collaborate with the AIC to craft a broad, inclusive, and intersectional definition of both accessibility and inclusion.
- **Action 2** – Select an Inclusive Language Guide for the City to ensure that the tone and intent of communications are current, respectful, and appropriate.

### Long-Term:

- **Action 3** – Establish a paid position for a Disability, Accessibility, and Inclusion Leader.

## GOAL TWO:

- **Review of Existing and Future City Plans and Capital Projects with an Accessibility Lens**

### Objectives of Goal Two:

The objective of Goal Two is to ensure that accessibility is 'built in' to the City's plans and projects moving forward. Integrating accessibility through proactive planning is the most effective and efficient way to move a community toward being accessible and inclusive for everyone. The AIC's input will guide the creation of an accessibility lens that is broad and inclusive.

### What We Heard:

- "There is an opportunity to standardize accessible practices at the City."
- "Accessibility sometimes gets missed or overlooked because it is not built into processes."
- "It is important that accessibility work carries forward into the future, and is not seen as a project with an end."

## KEY ACTIONS

### Short-Term:

- **Action 4** – Review the City's Communications and Engagement Plan through an accessibility and inclusion lens.
  - **Action 4a** – Consult the AIC to develop Accessibility Criteria for communications and engagement.
  - **Action 4b** – Incorporate the Accessibility Criteria into scoring matrixes, plans, bylaws and policies related to communications and engagement.

## Long-Term:

- **Action 5** – Using Accessibility Criteria co-developed with the AIC and other experts, review all current and future City Plans and Capital Projects.
  - **Action 5a** – Consult with the AIC to develop Accessibility Criteria to review/assess Transportation and Infrastructure, Development Services, Facilities, Parks and Trails, Recreation and Culture, Human Resources and promote and facilitate staff education.
  - **Action 5b** – Update existing and future City Plans and Capital Projects using the developed accessibility criteria as a lens.
  - **Action 5c** – Include accessibility in the scoring matrix used in decision-making for City Plans and Capital Projects. Create a template.

## GOAL THREE:

- **Conduct Audits of Accessibility and Inclusiveness and Develop Subsequent Actions**

### Overall Objectives of Goal Three:

- Conduct audits informed by a disability perspective and ensure they are comprehensive.
- Gain a thorough understanding of the accessibility of various City services, facilities and infrastructure.
- Identify and catalog gaps in accessibility and create lists of actions needed to address these gaps.
- Operationalize the lists of actions generated by the audits.



## What We Heard:

- “There are many accessibility gaps in the City’s sidewalk system. These are best addressed through a planned approach.”
- “There are also no inclusive after-school programs for neurodivergent children - it would be so cool for the City of West Kelowna to step up and offer one!”
- “Focus on connections to key community facilities, destinations, services and parks through sidewalks for people of all abilities.”

## 3 a) Accessible and Inclusive Transportation and Infrastructure Audit and Actions

### Objectives:

- Collaborate with disabled people to continuously improve accessible transportation.
- Gain a thorough understanding of the work required to make the City’s transportation systems accessible.
- Integrate accessibility improvements into current and future transportation projects.
- Ensure the City of West Kelowna’s snow clearing plan addresses the needs of elderly and disabled people.

## KEY ACTIONS

### Short-Term:

- **Action 6** – Initiate an **Accessible Transportation Audit (ATA)** for all aspects of transportation in the City with a focus on sidewalks, street crossings, parking, transit, and snow removal.
  - **Action 6a – Develop Guidelines:** Work with the AIC to create guidelines for the transportation audit. These guidelines should include the accessibility criteria developed with the AIC and other experts.

- **Action 6b – Conduct Audit:** Evaluate existing transportation infrastructure to assess the current level of accessibility, identify critical gaps and key priorities for improvement, and create a list of action items.
- **Action 6c – Operationalize:** Incorporate the action items identified in the Accessible Transportation Audit into ongoing or planned work wherever possible.

#### **Long-Term:**

- **Action 7 –** Develop a work action plan with timelines for stand-alone projects identified in the Accessible Transportation Audit. Consider reviews of current policies as identified in the Community Engagement Process (Spring 2024):
  - **Action 7a –** Include a review the snow clearing policy in the ATA to ensure that accessible parking spots, key sidewalks, and bus stops are prioritized.

### **3 b) Accessible and Inclusive Facilities Audit and Actions**

#### **Objectives:**

- Address urgent safety concerns.
- Collaborate with disabled people to continuously improve the accessibility of City facilities.
- Establish a thorough understanding of the work required to make the City’s facilities accessible.
- Incorporate accessibility improvements at current and future City facilities.

#### **KEY ACTIONS**

#### **Short-Term:**

- **Action 8 –** Initiate an **Accessible Facilities Audit** on City of West Kelowna facilities.

- **Action 8a – Develop Guidelines:** Work with the AIC to develop guidelines for the Accessible Facilities Audit. Guidelines should include using accessibility criteria developed with the AIC and other experts.
- **Action 8b – Conduct Audit:** Evaluate existing facilities to assess the current level of accessibility, identify critical gaps and key priorities for improvement, and create a list of action items.
- **Action 8c – Operationalize:** Incorporate actions identified in the Accessibility Facilities Audit into ongoing or planned work as much as possible. Consider the following as identified in the Community Engagement Process (Spring 2024):
  - **Action 8c (i) –** Assessment of the railings at Royal LePage Place and consider taking urgent action to address safety concerns.
  - **Action 8c (ii) –** Assessment of the parking and access at the Westside Seniors Activity Centre and consider taking urgent action to address safety concerns.
  - **Action 8c (iii) –** Liaise with partners such as Okanagan Regional Library and Westbank Farmer’s Market to share recommendations arising from the Accessible Facilities Audit. Consider sharing the Accessible Facilities Audit guidelines with partners to support continuity of accessibility improvements going forward.
  - **Action 8c (iv) –** Consider additional supports for children with cognitive disabilities, such as creating a quiet room at new community spaces designed and built by the City.

**Long-Term:**

- **Action 9 –** Develop a work action plan with timelines for stand-alone projects identified in the Accessible Facilities Audit. such as:

- **Action 9a** – As noted in the April 2024 community engagement, consider installing family-style accessible washrooms with changing stations at all City community facilities.
- **Action 9b** – As noted by AIC member during the review of the Draft Accessibility & Inclusion Plan, consider installing a service animal relief space in new community/public buildings.

### 3 c) Accessible and Inclusive Parks and Trails Audit and Actions

#### Objectives:

- Address urgent safety concerns.
- Collaborate with disabled people to continuously improve accessibility of City parks and trails.
- Establish a thorough understanding of the work required to make the City's parks, trails and beaches accessible.
- Incorporate accessibility improvements at current and future City outdoor spaces.

#### KEY ACTIONS

##### Immediate Priorities: Safety and Liability Concerns

- **Action 10** – Install signage at Julia's Junction - Inclusive Play Space warning of potential hot surfaces.

##### Short-Term:

- **Action 11** – Initiate an Accessible Parks and Trails Audit on City of West Kelowna parks and trails.
  - **Action 11a – Develop Guidelines:** Work with the AIC to develop guidelines for the Parks and Trails Audit. Guidelines should include using accessibility criteria developed with the AIC and other experts.

- **Action 11b – Conduct Audit:** Evaluate parks and trails, using the guidelines established in the Parks and Trail Audit, to assess the current level of accessibility, identify critical gaps, existing barriers such as gates, bars, and cattle guards and develop a strategy to replace them with accessible solutions.
- **Action 11c – Operationalize:** Incorporate actions identified in the Parks and Trails Audit into ongoing or planned work as much as possible.
- **Action 12 –** Develop a work action plan for stand-alone projects identified in Accessible Parks and Trails Audit, and consider improvements to key sites as identified in the Community Engagement Process (Spring 2024):
  - **Action 12a –** Pave the entire access path at Annette Beaudreau Amphitheatre.
  - **Action 12b –** Add more accessible parking and build accessible, family-style washrooms, with changing stations, at Julia’s Junction – Inclusive Play Space.
  - **Action 12c –** Upgrade the Gellatly Bay Recreational Corridor pathway to a more accessible, solid surface.

### 3 d) Accessible and Inclusive Communications and Engagement Audit and Actions

#### Objectives:

- Reach as many people as possible through City communications and engagement channels.
- Maintain appropriate and respectful City communications and engagement.
- Ensure emergency communications are available and accessible to people with disabilities.

## KEY ACTIONS

### Short-Term:

- **Action 13** – Ensure City communications and engagement are accessible.
  - **Action 13a – Develop Guidelines:** Work with the AIC to develop guidelines for the Communications and Engagement Audit. Guidelines should include using accessibility criteria developed with the AIC and other experts. Include various modalities such as American Sign Language (ASL), captioning, audio, video, braille, and plain language. Advance inclusivity efforts by exploring means for translation services or software tools to translate key communications and engagement materials, such as news releases. Initially consider Chinese, Tagalog, French and Punjabi, to remain consistent with news services such as the Government of British Columbia; see examples at <https://news.gov.bc.ca/>.
  - **Action 13b – Conduct Audit:** Using the guidelines from the Communications and Engagement Audit, evaluate City communications and engagement to assess the current level of accessibility, identify critical gaps and key priorities for improvement, and create a list of action items. Such as incorporating an Indigenous territorial acknowledgement statement on the City of West Kelowna’s corporate and engagement websites at [www.westkelownacity.ca](http://www.westkelownacity.ca) and [www.OurWK.ca](http://www.OurWK.ca).
  - **Action 13c – Operationalize:** Incorporate actions identified in the Communications and Engagement audit into ongoing or planned work.

### 3 e) Participate and Advocate to the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) to Lead an Accessible and Inclusive Emergency Planning and Response Review, Audit and Actions

#### KEY ACTIONS

##### Immediate:

- **Action 14** – Ensure that an accessibility focus is applied in City emergency planning and response by participating in a Regional Emergency Planning Audit (initiated and led by RDCO).
  - **Action 14a** – Ensure any emergency communications issued by the City are accessible, including closed captioning for people who are deaf but do not know ASL, and described video for people within the sight loss community.
  - **Action 14b** – Provide input on provincial review of the RDCO Emergency Response Plan to specifically include accessibility in emergency planning. This includes warning signs in multi-sensory modes; emergency communications in multiple modalities, including ASL and live captioning; accessible transportation and accommodations.
  - **Action 14c** – Collaborate with social service providers to increase awareness of accessibility in emergency planning and response.

### 3 f) Accessible and Inclusive Recreation and Culture Audit and Actions

##### Objectives:

- Foster a culture of accessibility and inclusion at the City of West Kelowna.
- Ensure that recreational and cultural programs are welcoming for everyone.
- Celebrate accessibility as a community-building endeavour.



## KEY ACTIONS

### Short Term:

- **Action 15** – Create more inclusive programming at community facilities, including for children and adults with sensory/auditory sensitivities, and young adults with disabilities.
- **Action 16** – Designate specific times for low-stimulation community recreation programming, such as dimmed lights and reduced noise.
- **Action 17** – Collaborate with partner organizations (e.g. CNIB, CRIS Adaptive, Accessible Okanagan, Pathways, etc.) to learn from them and co-create community-building projects that increase public awareness and provide education.
- **Action 18** – Adopt or develop an accessibility checklist (lens/resources) to ensure accessibility is considered in the planning and execution of all community events. This may include accessible portable washrooms, resting areas, shade, etc. Consider making the checklist publicly available.

### Long-Term:

- **Action 19** – Adopt an inclusive programming policy to guide community activities, events, and programs. This should include First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities, as well as BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ groups.
- **Action 20** – Liaise with community partners to create an ‘accessible pricing policy’ like KidSport, to help address affordability barriers.
- **Action 21** – Initiate an Accessibility Celebration event to create a positive message and environment around accessibility. Consider ideas to recognize days of significance to the disability community, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities, and BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ groups.

### 3 g) Accessible and Inclusive Policy Audit and Actions

#### Objectives:

- Embed accessibility in City processes.
- Increase knowledge and familiarity to establish accessibility and inclusion as the standard for corporate culture and actions within City operations.
- Raise awareness with City partners that accessibility and inclusion are priorities and include in the bids and proposals process.
- Make the City of West Kelowna a leader in accessibility and inclusion for all key decisions.

#### KEY ACTIONS

##### Short-Term:

- **Action 22** – Design all new City construction and infrastructure projects with an accessibility lens.
- **Action 23** – Create accessibility criteria for all Requests for Proposals (RFPs).
- **Action 24** – Adopt a policy to ensure that no existing accessible features are lost during repairs, upgrades, renovations, or redesigns.
- **Action 25** – Incorporate an accessibility lens when prioritizing municipal projects.

### 3 h) Accessible and Inclusive Human Resources and Staff Education Audit and Actions

#### Objectives:

- Support education and dialogue opportunities for staff to build understanding of accessibility and inclusion.

## KEY ACTIONS

### Short-Term:

- **Action 26** – Ensure ongoing education on accessibility and inclusion is provided to all city staff. Consider making training available to community partners and the business community.

## 3 i) Accessible and Inclusive Development Services Audit and Actions

### Objectives:

- Make accessibility and inclusion the standard in Development Services decision-making.
- Raise awareness with City partners so that they are aware that accessibility and inclusion are priorities for the municipality and recommend that they include these considerations in their bids and proposals.
- Make the City of West Kelowna a leader in accessibility and inclusion by making them key considerations in planning decisions.

## KEY ACTIONS

### Short-Term:

- **Action 27** – Consider developing an accessibility checklist (lens/resources) for businesses to complete/review when applying for a business license. Include accessibility and inclusion in the business licensing process
- **Action 28** – Meaningfully engage the AIC and/or an accessibility organization or company in all phases of design/review, planning, and implementation or construction on City buildings and projects.
  - **Action 28a** – Develop an accessibility lens to use in referral process.

- **Action 28b** – Provide training for Planning staff to ensure plan reviews are completed using an accessibility and inclusion lens.

## MONITORING

### Feedback Mechanism

The Accessible BC Act requires that prescribed organizations set up a mechanism for the public to report accessibility barriers they encounter. This feedback can provide valuable insight into new or previously unknown barriers in the community and can also be used to monitor the progress of accessibility in the City.

The City of West Kelowna will create an Accessibility Feedback Form for anyone to report a barrier. This form will be available on the City's website and in paper form available at City Hall. Barriers or issues reported will be forwarded to the responsible staff person, as well as to the AIC as appropriate, for consideration and prioritizing. All feedback will be collected in a database, which will become a resource for future planning.

### Monitoring Progress

The City of West Kelowna will monitor its progress on the journey towards an accessible and inclusive community using several accountability mechanisms:

- **Transparency:** Celebrate accessibility successes and achievements to the public via the City website, public service announcements, and other communication channels.
- **Reporting:** Report milestones and completed actions from this plan in the Annual Report.
- **Reviewing:** Mayor and Council will receive an annual update and review of actions completed and outstanding.
- **Listening:** Continue to consult with the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee on the progress, outcomes, and next steps towards implementation of the Plan.

- **Asking:** Continue to invite feedback and input on access and barriers from people with lived experiences who live, work and/or visit West Kelowna.
- **Recording:** Maintain a living document of all recommendations submitted during the engagement process, input and advice from the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee, and feedback from the Feedback Mechanism.
- **Revisiting:** The City of West Kelowna’s Accessibility and Inclusion Plan covers a three-year timeframe. To continue its thoughtful and planned approach to accessibility and inclusion, the City will plan to renew and update its Accessibility and Inclusion Plan after three years.

## NEXT STEPS - IMPLEMENTATION

The actions in this plan are broad and overarching. However, the plan does not include specific steps and processes to implement the actions. To that end, the City of West Kelowna, with the support of the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee, will work towards a high-level Implementation Plan, including details related to when the work will be done, how progress will be measured and reported, and how actions will be adjusted, if needed.

The Implementation Plan will be an opportunity for people in West Kelowna to engage in community-building, where inclusion becomes an on-going practice, involving people with disabilities and those who face barriers, in the many stages of designing actions—from concept to implementation—and feedback.

## APPENDICES

1. Background of Developing Plan with AIC
2. List of Resources
3. Relevant Legislation
4. Accessibility Lens
5. Funding Opportunities
6. Disability Related Organizations in BC
7. What We Heard Report

## APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND WORK AND RESEARCH

To ensure this plan is robust, actionable, and effective, it is important that it integrates well with existing City of West Kelowna policies and strategic priorities, and complements and strengthens existing frameworks.

As a part of the background work to begin the process of engaging the Committee, the public, and staff, existing plans and policies were reviewed. It was important to understand how the City currently plans for accessibility and inclusion, where we are in the cycle of updating and/or renewing relevant plans, and what opportunities there are for further integrating accessibility and inclusion into City frameworks.

Key documents, plans, and strategies were reviewed including the following:

- The Official Community Plan, 2020-2040
- Our Community Vision, 2020-2040
- Council's 2022-2026 Strategic Priorities
- Transportation Master Plan (Feb. 2014)
- Housing Strategy
- Parks Master Plan
- Recreational Trails Master Plan
- Boucherie and Casa Loma Multi-Use Pathways
- 2023 Annual Report
- 2022 Annual Report
- Relevant bylaws and policies

Future updates of the Communications and Engagement Plan should also include an accessibility and inclusion lens, as resources permit.

### Highlights of the Review

The City of West Kelowna reported several specific activities that improved accessibility in the 2022 Annual Report, including accessibility upgrades in Beechnut Park and Casa Loma Dock Park



The City of West Kelowna's Vision document reflects a strong desire to build a city and communities that are welcoming, livable, and accessible to all people. Key statements include:

- "We are inclusive and supportive of one another, and we are ready to create our future together."
- "Our West Kelowna is a city that is inclusive and welcoming to all."
- "We care for and support one another and celebrate our diversity."
- "We engage with our community to make important decisions together."
- "We plan ahead for our future infrastructure needs."
- "We remain prepared to face future emergencies."

The City of West Kelowna's Official Community Plan (OCP) is a forward-looking document that is informed by the City's Vision. The review found that the plan considers a wide range of community needs and users. Broadly, in terms of accessibility, the OCP:

- Refers to Universal Design, the requirements of the large over-55 population, calls for transit and pedestrian-oriented planning, need for more accessible housing, and ground-oriented.
- Considers additional residential uses in combination with the institutional use, where the proposed residential use supports housing initiatives with a broader community interest such as supportive, transitional, community, affordable or non-market housing.
- Supports initiatives designed to meet the needs of all residents in the community for a range of social considerations, such as arts, culture, recreation and community services, heritage, public health and safety, food security, schools and housing attainability.
- States that there should be no barriers to access – physical, social or economic – including access to effective public transportation.
- Supports fostering community interaction and bringing together people of diverse backgrounds, lifestyles, generations, abilities, and interests through a variety of

inclusive leisure, arts, cultural and recreational opportunities, including the arts and culture of Indigenous Peoples.

- Supports the creation of a network of community and recreational facilities which are conveniently accessible to all neighbourhoods, adaptable to changing needs, and with no barriers to entry (age, ability, religion, gender, etc.).

Descriptors such as “universal accessibility”, “barrier-free” and “aging-in-place” appear numerous times throughout the OCP.

Examples include:

- Section 3.1.3 Built Form and Community Character: “New development should incorporate principles of universal accessibility.”
- Section 3.6.1.3 Community Services and Recreation Policies: “Encourage new development to contribute to or deliver, where appropriate, universally accessible community spaces and facilities including for childcare, recreation, and youth programming.”

The review found that the City of West Kelowna is on a path toward a community that is inclusive, welcoming, and accessible to its residents and visitors.

The review also found that there are many opportunities to further embed accessibility throughout the OCP. Undertaking the actions in this Accessibility and Inclusion Plan—such as conducting accessibility audits to identify priorities, developing accessibility criteria, and creating workplans—will provide much more clear and specific direction that can be incorporated into future iterations of the OCP.

## APPENDIX 2: LIST OF RESOURCES

### Best Practices and Research

- Accessible Community Bylaws
  - [Sparc BC](#)
- CNIB - Canadian Institute for the Blind
  - [Access Labs](#)
  - [Clearing Our Path Version 2.0](#)
    - [CNIB Clearing Our Path info on accessible signage](#)
    - [CNIB Clearing Our Path info regarding accessible pedestrian signals](#)
    - [CNIB Clearing Our Path info on placements/functions of different types of tactile walking surface indicator\(TWSI\)](#)
- Employment and Social Development Canada:
  - [A way with words and images: Guide for communicating with and about persons with disabilities](#)
- Example of an Accessible Wayfinding Strategy:
  - [City of Port Moody](#)
- Guide for increasing diversity on accessibility committees:
  - [University of Guelph](#)
- All Our Voices – Engagement Framework
  - [City of Victoria](#)
- Local Government Community Effort Booklet
  - [Union of BC Municipalities](#)
- The Accessibility Toolkit
  - [University of British Columbia](#)

- Universal Design Guidelines for Outdoor Spaces: Plan and Design of Choice
  - [City of Maple Ridge](#)
- International Journal of E-Planning Research
  - [Exploring the Smart Future of Participation: Community, Inclusivity, and People With Disabilities](#)  
-Bricout & Moon, 2021
- Government of BC news website
  - Translation services examples: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/>
- City of Vancouver corporate website
  - Territorial acknowledgment example: <https://vancouver.ca/>

### Accessible Event Checklist

- [Accessible Events Checklist](#)
  - City of Vancouver

### Accessibility Criteria

- Emergency Planning Resources
  - [Government of British Columbia](#)
- Emergency Response Notification Form
  - [City of Port Coquitlam](#)
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Resources for BC Local Governments
  - [Local Government Management Association of British Columbia](#)
  - [Info of CUTA EDI award for TransLink accessible signage](#)

## **APPENDIX 3: RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

- BC Accessibility Standards – under development
- BC Building Code
- Accessible BC Act
- The British Columbia Human Rights Code
- The Local Government Act
- The Community Charter
- The Building Act and The Public Health Act

## APPENDIX 4: ACCESSIBILITY LENS

### Creating an Accessibility Lens

- Core Components of an Intersectional Accessibility Lens:
  - <https://accessible.canada.ca/can-asc-1-1/AnnexD>
- Example of a Disability Policy Lens
  - <https://www.disabilitypolicyalliance.ca/tools/disability-policy-lens.html>

The Canadian Disability Policy Alliance (CDPA) has developed a Disability Policy Lens “to assist scholars, policy-makers & advocates to analyze policy affecting people with disabilities in Canada. The Disability Policy Lens [is] a means of ensuring that the implications for people with disabilities are taken into account in every policy in Canada.”

The CDPA’s lens consists of seven questions, designed as a tool to assist policy makers to consider the ways a decision or policy will affect people living with disabilities who live in or visit their community.

### CDPA’s Seven Questions:

1. Does the policy specifically mention people with disabilities? Has explicit consideration been afforded to the consequences for people with disabilities?
2. If so, how is disability defined? Who is considered “disabled” according to the policy? Does the policy refer specifically to people with:
  - a. physical, cognitive, sensory or mental illness-related disabilities?
  - b. permanent, long-standing, temporary or episodic disabilities?
  - c. severe, moderate or mild disabilities?
  - d. Who is considered eligible for consideration under the policy? Who is included / excluded, and who decides who qualifies as disabled?
3. Which of the following three aims does the policy seek to achieve?
  - a. Access – ability to participate
  - b. Support – resources to address special needs
  - c. Equity – freedom from discrimination

- d. If the goal is equity, does the policy define equity as:
  - i. Outcome equity – whatever it takes to achieve equal outcomes with non-disabled;
  - ii. Vertical equity – special considerations to create equal opportunity for disabled people;
  - iii. Horizontal equity – equal treatment; that is, the same as everyone else.
  
4. Does the policy view disabled people as members of a minority group with special needs, or as one of the many citizen groups whose issues must be considered in establishing policy? As individual rights holders, or as members of the collective responsible for the good of the whole population?
  
5. How does the policy relate to other policies (for a survey of legislation, regulations, programs related to disability in Canada:
  - a. within the jurisdiction – in the same Ministry, in other Ministries (including both disability specific and non-disability-specific policy)?
  - b. in other jurisdictions -- national, provincial, regional, municipal?
  
6. How is the allocation of scarce resources affected by this policy? Who wins and who loses when this policy is implemented? What would be the impact on: other disability groups; business / private sector; other minority groups; other citizens generally / taxpayers?
  
7. How did this policy come into effect? What is the history associated with it? Who were the champions / detractors? Where might one anticipate support / opposition?

Source: <https://www.disabilitypolicyalliance.ca/tools/disability-policy-lens.html>

### **Anti-Ableism (USA, Canada, International)**

- <https://www.everydayactivismnetwork.org/archive/how-to-be-anti-ableist>
- <https://inclusioncanada.ca/this-is-ableism/>
- <https://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/54121.html>
  - Anti-Ableism Action Plan
- <https://vimeo.com/492480733>
  - What is Ableism? United Nations Human Rights Commission



## APPENDIX 5: FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

*This list is an overview of organizations and programs that currently provide funding or have provided funding for past accessibility initiatives. Please contact the organization to determine whether the funding is still available or whether future funding will be offered. This list has been updated for 2024.*

- BC Accessibility Hub Resource
  - Web link: [Disability Alliance BC](#)

### Mixed Grants

- National AccessAbility Week
  - Web link: [Accessible Canada – National AccessAbility Week Funding](#)
  - Audience for grant: mixed, including education, and local government

### Community Grants

- Accessibility Project Grants
  - Web link: [Accessibility Projects – Disability Alliance BC](#)
- Local Community Accessibility Grant Program
  - Web link: [Local Community Accessibility Grant Program – Sparc BC](#)
  - Audience for grant: Local governments
- Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund
  - Web link: [Vancouver Foundation](#)
  - Audience for grant: Indigenous communities
- Lighthouse Organizations Fund
  - Web link: [Lighthouse Organizations Fund - Vancouver Foundation](#)
  - Audience for grant: Large charities working to advance poverty reduction and social inclusion
- The Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF)
  - Web Link: [Enabling Accessibility Fund – Government of Canada](#)

- Audience for grant: The Government of Canada website states that “funding (is) for projects that make Canadian communities and workplaces more accessible for persons with disabilities. EAF aims to create more opportunities for persons with disabilities to take part in community activities, programs and services, or access employment.”
- The Opportunities Fund
  - Web link: [Opportunities Fund – BC Centre For Ability](#)
  - Audience for grant: A program that assists persons with disabilities to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment – for persons with disabilities and employers
- Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) B.C. Grants Program
  - Web Link: [British Columbia Accessibility Grants - Rick Hansen Foundation](#)
  - Audience for grant: Municipalities and Indigenous communities
- LEVEL BIPOC Grants
  - Web Link: [LEVEL BIPOC Grants - Vancouver Foundation](#)
    - Grant funder: Vancouver Foundation
  - Audience for grant: For BIPOC-led organizations in BC to support work in racial equity and racial justice.
- Access Awareness Day Grants
  - Web link: [Local Community Accessibility Grant Program – Sparc BC](#)
  - Audience for grant: Local government partners, local accessibility committees, as well as local disability serving organizations.
- BC Rehab Project Grant Program
  - Web link: [Project Grant Eligibility - BC Rehab Foundation](#)
  - Audience for grant: Non-profit organizations and community groups in British Columbia.
- Age-Friendly Community Grants
  - Web link: [Age-friendly Communities – BC Healthy Communities](#)
  - Audience for grant: “The BC Age-friendly Communities Program provides funding, resources and capacity-building supports to help Indigenous and local governments, as well as other partners to achieve this vision.”

- Community Gaming Grants
  - Web link: [Community Gaming Grants – Government of British Columbia](#)
  - Audience for grant: Not-for-profit organizations providing programs or services of direct benefit to the broader community.
- Community Development Grants
  - Web link: [Community Development Grants - Jumpstart](#)
  - Audience for grant: Organizations that offer sports and recreation programming for kids between the ages of 4 and 18 in financial need or youth with disabilities between the ages of 4 and 25.

### Home Renovation Grants

- The BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations
  - Web link: [BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations – BC Housing](#)
  - Audience for grant: The website says that “The program allows seniors and people with permanent disabilities and diminished ability with low and moderate incomes to gain greater independence within their homes.”
- The Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and persons with disabilities
  - Web link: [Home renovation tax credit for seniors and persons with disabilities – Government of British Columbia](#)
  - Audience for grant: Seniors and persons with disabilities – eligible individuals 65 and over to assist with the cost of certain permanent home renovations to improve accessibility or be more functional or mobile at home.

### Property Tax Grants

- Home owner grant for people with disabilities
  - Web link: [Home owner grant for people with disabilities – Government of British Columbia](#)
  - Audience for grant: People with disabilities who receive government funding for cost of living and persons with disabilities who have expenditures related to their disability over a certain amount a month or

who have made modifications to their residence to accommodate their disability.

- Property Tax Deferment program
  - Web link: [Property tax deferment program – Government of British Columbia](#)
  - Audience for grant: People with disabilities who cannot afford to pay property taxes for the year can have the taxes deferred.

## Workplace Grants

- WorkBC Assistive Technology Services
  - Web link: [WorkBC Assistive Technology Services](#)
- Disability Management Enhancement
  - Web link: [Support for BC Workplaces to Assess, Improve or Develop a DM Program – National Institute of Disability Management and Research](#)
- Workplace Accessibility Grant
  - Web link: [Workplace Accessibility Grant – Small Business BC](#)

## Other Grants

It should be noted that many other federal and provincial grants, especially those that support community and cultural events, recreational and tourism infrastructure and active transportation and transit projects, contain accessibility and inclusion criteria or seek specific assurances that programs, services and/or capital projects will be accessible and inclusive.

## APPENDIX 6: DISABILITY RELATED ORGANIZATIONS IN BC\*

*\*Please note that this is not an exhaustive list but one created with input from the current AIC Members*

- Agur Lake Camp
- arc programs
- BC Children's Hospital
- BCG Okanagan
- Brain Injury Society (SOSBIS)
- Brain Trust
- British Columbia Professional Firefighters' Burn Fund
- Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB)
- Canadian Hearing Services
- Canadian Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
- Canadian Red Cross
- Community Living British Columbia
- Community Recreational Initiatives Society and CRIS Adaptive Adventures
- Disability Alliance BC
- Family Connection (FCC) – arc programs
- Foundry BC
- Interior Health Authority
- Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Neil Squire Society
- Okanagan Similkameen Neurological Society (OSNS)
- OneSky Community Resources
- Pain BC
- Partners in Resources (PIERS)
- Rick Hansen Foundation
- Society for Community Living (PDSCL)
- Starbright Children's Development Centre
- Special Olympics
- Spinal Cord Injury BC (SCI BC)
- Therapeutic Lake Cruises Society
- Trans-Canada Trail (TCT)
- White Cane Group
- WorkBC
- YMCA of the Southern Interior

## **APPENDIX 7: WHAT WE HEARD REPORT**

\*Engagement Summary Report follows on next pages





# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

## Consultation Summary Report Spring 2024







## Background

The City of West Kelowna's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC) was formed to bring community members and organizations together to work collaboratively with municipal staff to discuss, develop, improve, promote, and sustain community accessibility and inclusion. This includes reducing and removing barriers associated with accessibility, focusing on experiences of people with different abilities, and fostering an all-encompassing community.



## Summary

Public input was open from **April 9 – 30, 2024** and included a 16 question survey that was available in a variety of formats to provide opportunities for anyone to share their input. The primary goal was to hear from West Kelowna residents and stakeholders to understand the current accessibility landscape and any barriers within our community.

The consultation provided multiple ways to get involved. The community was invited to share their thoughts via an online survey at [OurWK.ca/accessibility](https://OurWK.ca/accessibility), ask questions and learn more about the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee.

We also provided multiple alternative methods for sharing input.

Paper copies of the feedback form were located at:

- **West Kelowna City Hall** – 2760 Cameron Rd, West Kelowna, B.C.
- **Westside Seniors Activity Centre** – 3661 Old Okanagan Hwy, West Kelowna, B.C.
- **Johnson Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre** – 3737 Old Okanagan Hwy, West Kelowna, B.C.

Results of what we heard are highlighted in this report and reflect the opinions of those that participated.

For a summary of the survey responses, please see **Attachment 1: Feedback Summary Report**.



## What we heard

During the Accessibility Plan consultation, we received a total of 111 completed surveys. An overview of the survey responses are summarized on Page 3 of this report.

The qualitative outcomes of the feedback reflect the opinions of those who participated in the process. All questions were optional, and respondents could choose to complete the form anonymously.

For complete results and comments from our survey, see **Attachment 2: Detailed Survey Report**.

During the engagement period, we interacted with the public and stakeholders in a variety of ways:

- 989 visitors to [OurWK.ca/accessibility](https://OurWK.ca/accessibility)
  - 259 people were informed (clicked through the content)
  - 814 people were aware (visited at least one page)



## Survey highlights

- 39% said they would rate the City of West Kelowna's accessibility as okay (43 people)
- 70% said that someone in their family/household has accessibility needs (78 people)
- 41% said either themselves or someone in their household has experienced accessibility barriers at a City facility (46 people)
- 50% said they have experienced physical environment barriers in the City (56 people)
- 32% said they have experienced accessibility barriers at a park, playground or trail (36 people)



## Comments

Participants had the option to provide additional feedback and share ideas via open comment boxes for five of the questions. Commenting was optional and not all respondents opted to provide input.

There was a total of 454 comments from the 111 respondents who completed the survey.

When asked about what an Accessible West Kelowna looks like, some participants answered:

- A city for everyone to enjoy
- A place where all can attend, regardless of abilities.
- Inclusive for anyone with differing abilities whether physical or mental - zero stigma, accessibility built into all future planning

To see the detailed survey results, please refer to **Attachment 2: Detailed Survey Report**.



## Print Advertising

During the engagement period, we ran a total of two print newspaper ads in the local weekly papers: West K News and Westside Weekly.

To further inform our community, posters with QR codes were placed at City Hall, Johnson Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre and the Westside Seniors Activity Centre.



## Digital outreach

Weekly posts were shared on the City's social media channels to create awareness of the engagement and how to participate, including Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn.

During the engagement period, we shared three organic (none paid) posts on each of our main channels. We also ran two paid ads on Facebook and one paid ad on Instagram.



# Accessibility Plan Consultation At-A-Glance

## Who we heard from



# 111

total online and paper survey forms received



# 454

total comments received via online and paper surveys

## How we connected



# 989

total visitors to [OurWK.ca/accessibility](http://OurWK.ca/accessibility)

- 259 visitors informed (clicked through the content)
- 814 visitors aware (visited at least one page)



# 3

e-News updates issued and direct notifications to residents' associations



# 3726

recipients of e-News

## Social media interactions



# 2785

total organic social media impressions



- 4 posts
- 3454 organic post views
- 19,337 paid post views



- 4 posts
- 586 organic post views



- 4 posts
- 1120 organic post views



- 3 posts
- 1111 organic post views



## Social media highlights

2,785 total organic (non-paid) social media impressions (the number of times our post was on-screen)

- **Facebook:**
  - Total posts: 4 (2 non-paid and 2 paid)
  - 3,454 organic post views
  - 19,337 paid post views
- **Instagram:**
  - Total posts: 4
  - 1,120 non-paid post views
- **X (formerly Twitter):**
  - Total posts: 4
  - 586 non-paid post views
- **LinkedIn:**
  - Total posts: 3
  - 1,111 non-paid post views

In addition to our daily monitoring of our social media platforms, we conducted regular media tracking and provided additional messaging on the City's website in a variety of areas including a homepage banner linking to the OurWK.ca webpage and consultation information was also located on the Council Committees City webpage giving users access to our online engagement platform.



## Next steps

Results from the engagement period have been summarized for assisting our consultant in drafting West Kelowna's first Accessibility Plan.