



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: May 13, 2025

From: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

File No: P 24-17

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

Report Prepared by: Brent Magnan, Director of Community Development

Report Reviewed by: Ron Bowles, Chief Administrative Officer

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### RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT** Council approve the City's Accessibility Plan as presented.

### STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

**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

A draft Accessibility & Inclusion Plan was prepared and brought forward to Council on January 28, 2025. At that time, Council provided feedback related to the content of the document, primarily focusing on:

- Recognizing the importance of many of the proposed projects while ensuring the projects were achievable in a 3 year timeline.
- Concern with language that commits the City to timelines or resources that that haven't been allocated or budgeted for; further recognizing the financial and resource challenges in implementing the plan.

- Focusing the document on Accessibility and related improvements as defined under the *Accessible BC Act*: to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.

As such, the document has been further refined in accordance with Council’s direction and has been revised to:

- Improve formatting and for better visual flow, primarily in the Actions section.
- Remove redundancy and consolidate similar actions
- Use language such as ‘consider the following’ to ensure all potential projects are captured, but allows for a reasonable implementation in a 3 year timeline.
- Provide clarity and focus of the document on Accessibility as defined under the *Act*.

## **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:
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Transportation</b></li> <li>b. <b>Facilities</b></li> <li>c. <b>Parks &amp; Trails</b></li> <li>d. <b>Communications &amp; Engagement</b></li> <li>e. <b>Emergency Planning &amp; Response</b></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. <b>Recreation &amp; Culture</b></li> <li>g. <b>Policy</b></li> <li>h. <b>Human Resources &amp; Staff Education</b></li> <li>i. <b>Development &amp; Building Services</b></li> </ol>
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Focusing on audits across different departments will ensure that a more comprehensive review of existing accessibility and inclusion measures, as well as identification of gaps, can be completed. This will require collaboration with experts in various fields to ensure that the changes and enhancements made are significant and impactful.

The final Accessibility Plan has been prepared in a format that has limited tables, charts, or graphs, and photographs to ensure accessibility for individuals with visual impairments

and to ensure compatibility with accessibility standards, making it readable via screen readers.

#### Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (AIC)

The plan was presented to the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee on April 9, 2025. At that time, the Committee provided general comments on the document including recognition of it being more accessible and easier to review and support for the focus on accessibility, noting that inclusion continues to be important. The Committee further passed the following resolutions:

**THAT** the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee recommends consideration of blue lights for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to be added to the appropriate category of the City of West Kelowna Accessibility Plan.

**THAT** the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee recommends support for the City of West Kelowna Accessibility Plan with recommendations from Council.

The plan has been subsequently amended to include reference to consideration of adding blue lights to streetlights for Emergency Medical Services vehicle detection to assist the deaf when driving.

#### AIC Terms of Reference:

With the City's Accessibility Plan preparing to move into an implementation phase, staff will review the Terms of Reference for the AIC, detailing their role in supporting the City in achieving the outlined goals and actions. The updated terms of reference will consider the Accessibility Plan timeline, staff and financial resources, interdepartmental collaboration, and established workplan capacity. This will assist in ensuring clarity in expectations of the Committee and the City moving forward.

#### Next Steps:

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 departments, the City demonstrates its commitment to improving accessibility in the community.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Accessibility and Inclusion Plan was developed with a \$10,000 grant from Disability Alliance BC, which funded the hiring of Spring Hawes (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 received 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 budgeted in the 2025 10-year Capital Plan beginning in 2026, which identifies \$51,500 every 3 years towards completing accessibility audits, along with an additional \$51,500 annually for accessibility projects.

## COUNCIL REPORT / RESOLUTION HISTORY

Date	Report Topic / Resolution	Resolution No.
<p><b>June 13, 2023</b></p>	<p><b>THAT</b> Council approves the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee’s Terms of Reference as amended;  <b>THAT</b> Council directs staff to seek the new Accessibility and Inclusion Committee’s membership through means of public advertisements and recruitment; and  <b>THAT</b> Council directs staff to bring the list of volunteers back to Council for appointment of the members.</p>	<p><b>C226/23</b></p>
<p><b>January 28, 2025</b></p>	<p><b>THAT</b> Staff be directed to prepare a resolution for SILGA, advocating for Provincial Funding for implementation of Provincially mandated Accessibility and Inclusion Plans.</p>	<p><b>C022/25</b></p>

## 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 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.

**Alternate Recommendation:**

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

Powerpoint: Yes  No

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: Accessibility Plan

Attachment 2: Appendices for Accessibility Plan