

City of West Kelowna Accessibility Plan 2025-2028



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Note: Supplementary materials are contained in the appendices.



MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL

Our Accessibility Story

The formation of the City of West Kelowna's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee (the Committee) marked a significant milestone in the City's accessibility journey and fulfilled a key requirement of the Accessible B.C. 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 Committee in late 2023.

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

The Committee is advancing Council's vision, mission, and strategic priorities aimed at increasing accessibility and inclusivity within our community. The Committee is advising 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 (the Committee) for their dedication, expertise, and insights shaped by their lived experiences. The Committee has worked closely with City staff and consultant, **Spring Hawes**, in developing a comprehensive Accessibility Plan. This Plan reflects a co-creation process involving extensive consultation with Committee members and meaningful community engagement.

We greatly appreciate and commend the exceptional contributions of **Spring Hawes**, the Committee'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, Committee members, for your commitment and collaboration in this vital initiative:

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

The City recognizes the financial and resource support from Disability Alliance B.C., which were important components in supporting the development of the City's Accessibility Plan.

Territorial Acknowledgement

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

ACRONYMS

- A.S.L. American Sign Language
- B.C. British Columbia
- C.N.I.B. Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- J.B.M.A.C. Johnson Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre
- P.T.S.D. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- R.D.C.O. Regional District of Central Okanagan
- R.F.P. Request for Proposal
- W.F.N. Westbank First Nation

DEFINITIONS

- **Disability** means an inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier.
- **Barriers** are anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Barriers can be: (a) caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies, and (b) affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.
- **Impairment** includes a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary or episodic.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of West Kelowna Accessibility 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 provides numerous opportunities for the City of West Kelowna to showcase efforts that align with the Accessible B.C. 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 accessible 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 (the Committee). 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 B.C. Act, explains the City of West Kelowna's approach using an accessibility lens, and outlines a path forward for fostering accessibility. It follows the guiding principles of the provincial Accessible B.C. Act to present the City's actions related to accessibility. 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 Accessibility Audits

These three goals are supported by 16 recommended actions, categorized as Short-Term and Long-Term.

Finally, the plan outlines next steps. This plan includes the identified actions to be addressed, 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 40,093 residents (B.C. Stats, 2025), 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 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 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 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 P.T.S.D., 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 environment that promotes 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, ableist belief systems must change.

Ableism is rooted in the idea that people with disabilities are inferior or less capable, which significantly hinders accessibility. 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 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 Plan is driven by the [Accessible B.C. Act](#) legislation. Enacted in 2021 by the Government of British Columbia, the act represents a significant advancement in promoting accessibility. 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, develop and establish Accessibility Committees, create and adopt accessibility plans, identify and remove barriers to accessibility, and engage with the community to receive ongoing input about accessibility concerns. Under the Act, municipalities must review and update their accessibility plans every

three years. 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 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 B.C. develop and implement their Accessibility Plans to ensure they 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 Plan are achieved as expected.
- Senior leadership continues to champion the work outlined in the City of West Kelowna Accessibility 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. They are appropriately trained to address issues of accessibility 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 financial and staff resources.



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

Background

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

The formation of the 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 Plan for community review."

Committee Members

As mandated by the Accessible B.C. 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 Committee

The Committee's roles and responsibilities are guided by their Terms of Reference which include:

1. Advising on a process for receiving public comments about accessibility.
2. Establishing and maintaining an accessibility plan.
3. Collaborating to identify and implement initiatives that enhance accessibility and inclusion in the community.
4. Providing guidance and advice on accessibility within the organization and municipal events including strategies to make operations more inclusive.
5. Working cooperatively with agencies representing people with disabilities to provide input on matters affecting individuals facing barriers within our community.
6. Reviewing and making recommendations on referrals from staff, Council, and other committees.
7. 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.
8. Investigating funding opportunities to support inclusion and accessibility initiatives.

The Committee's first priority, as outlined in the Accessible B.C. Act, was to work with the City to create an Accessibility Plan aimed at expanding and improving accessibility in West Kelowna. An additional requirement was to develop a feedback mechanism to ensure continuous improvement in accessibility throughout the City.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Guiding Principles

The City of West Kelowna, as required by the Accessible B.C. Act, consulted with the Committee and considered the following principles in the creation of the Accessibility 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.

Committee Involvement and Consultation

The Committee played a vital role in the creation of a practical and actionable Accessibility Plan, and adopted an iterative approach, following a purposeful 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 accessible 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. Input was collected from April 9 to 30, 2024, via a 16-question survey distributed through multiple 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.

The public was also encouraged to share their thoughts online through the City's engagement website at OurWK.ca/accessibility, where participants could complete the survey, ask questions and learn more.

Survey highlights:

- 39 per cent said they would rate the City of West Kelowna's accessibility as okay (43 people).
- 70 per cent said that someone in their family/household has accessibility needs (78 people).
- 41 per cent 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 Committee 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 Committee reconvened to review staff comments and incorporate this feedback into their final recommendations for key actions to include in the Accessibility 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 are 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 Plan outlines recommended actions to:

- Develop specific accessibility criteria in collaboration with the 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 the City of West Kelowna undertakes accessibility improvements that are thoughtfully designed and effectively meet the needs of as many people with lived experiences as possible.



GOALS AND RECOMMENDED 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 **16 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 accessible community. It is acknowledged that time and resource availability will guide the completion of projects and actions within.

To this end, the actions have been organized into two recommended timeframes. All actions and their corresponding sub-actions are compiled in multiple tables within the document. Each action in the table is accompanied by an associated outcome, measurable indicators, and the responsible department.

- **Short-Term Actions:** Fourteen actions are designated as short-term. These actions primarily focus on assessing the current state of accessibility, and updating planning documents, bylaws, and policies to integrate accessibility into City operations.
- **Long-term Actions:** Two 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 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.

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.”

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short Term	Long Term
Action 1	Action 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select an Inclusive Language Guide for the City to ensure that the tone and intent of communications are current, respectful, and appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider establishing a paid position as a Disability and Accessibility Leader.

GOAL TWO: REVIEW 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 into 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 for everyone.

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.”

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term	Long-Term
Action 3	Action 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the City's Communications and Engagement Plan through an accessibility lens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review all future City Plans and Capital Projects through an accessibility lens.• 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 DEVELOP SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

Overall Objectives of Goal Three:

- Conduct audits informed by a disability perspective and ensure they are comprehensive.
 - Develop specific and unique guidelines for each audit.
 - Use the guidelines to evaluate what currently exists to assess the current level of accessibility.
 - Identify critical gaps in accessibility and key priorities for improvement.
 - Create a list of action items to address identified gaps in accessibility.
 - Operationalize: Incorporate the action items identified in the audits into ongoing or planned work wherever possible.
- Gain a thorough understanding of the accessibility of various City services, facilities and infrastructure.
- Create guidelines for each audit. These guidelines should include the accessibility criteria developed with the Committee and other experts.
- The recommended actions noted within each Audit have been identified from the Community Engagement Process (April 2024).

What We Heard:

- “There are many accessibility gaps in the City’s sidewalk system. These are best addressed through a planned approach.”
- “Focus on connections to key community facilities, destinations, services and parks through sidewalks for people of all abilities.”

3.1 Accessible 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term
Action 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate an Accessible Transportation Audit for all aspects of transportation in the City with a focus on sidewalks, street crossings, parking, transit, and snow removal / snow clearing. Consider adding blue lights to streetlights for EMS vehicle detection to assist the deaf when driving.

3.2 Accessible 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term
Action 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate an Accessible Facilities Audit on City of West Kelowna facilities and consider the following recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment of the railings at Royal LePage Place. ○ Assessment of the parking and access at the Westside Seniors Activity Centre and consider taking urgent action to address safety concerns. ○ The need for supports for children with cognitive disabilities such as quiet rooms in new community spaces. ○ The need for family-style accessible washrooms with changing stations in community facilities. ○ The need for service animal relief spaces in new community buildings.
Action 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

3.3 Accessible 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term
Action 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install signage at Julia's Junction - Inclusive Play Space warning of potential hot surfaces.
Action 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate an Accessible Parks and Trails Audit on City of West Kelowna parks and trails, and consider the following into the Audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accessibility of the Annette Beaudreau Amphitheatre (i.e., paved access). ○ Additional accessible parking and family-style washrooms, with changing stations, at Julia's Junction – Inclusive Play Space. ○ The feasibility of upgrading the Gellatly Bay Recreational Corridor pathway to a more accessible, solid surface.

3.4 Accessible Communications and Engagement

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.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term
Action 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiate Communications and Engagement Audit to ensure City communications and engagement are accessible.

3.5 Participate and Advocate to the Regional District of Central Okanagan (R.D.C.O.) to lead an Accessible Emergency Planning and Response Review, Audit and Actions

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term
Action 11
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that an accessibility focus is applied in City emergency planning and response by advocating for and participating in a Regional Emergency Planning Audit which incorporates the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Review of accessibility of emergency communications, including closed captioning, described video, A.S.L. and live captioning○ Review of accessible transportation and accommodations.
Action 12
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with social service providers to increase awareness of accessibility in emergency planning and response.

3.6 Accessible Recreation and Culture Audit and Actions

Objectives:

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

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term
Action 13
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiate an Accessible Recreation and Culture Audit, incorporating the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Review the programming at community facilities, including for children and adults with sensory/auditory sensitivities, and young adults with disabilities.○ Designate specific times for low-stimulation community recreation programming, such as dimmed lights and reduced noise.○ Collaborate with partner organizations to learn from them and co-create community-building projects that increase public awareness and provide education.○ Adopt or develop an accessibility checklist (lens/resources) to ensure accessibility is considered in the planning and execution of all community events.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ This may include accessible portable washrooms, resting areas, shade, etc. and considerations for making the checklist publicly available.○ Adopt an accessible programming policy to guide community activities, events, and programs.○ Liaise with community partners to create an accessible pricing policy, to help address affordability barriers.○ Initiate an accessibility celebration event to create a positive message and environment around accessibility.

3.7 Review Existing and Future Policies to Increase Accessibility

Objectives:

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

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term
Action 14
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review accessibility in the review and creation of all policies moving forward including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Updating the City's procurement policies to increase the accessibility of City construction and infrastructure projects.○ Creating accessibility criteria for all Requests for Proposals (R.F.P.s).○ Creating a policy to ensure that no existing accessible features are lost during repairs, upgrades, renovations, or redesigns.○ Incorporating an accessibility lens when prioritizing municipal projects.

3.8 Accessible Human Resources and Staff Education Audit and Actions

Objectives:

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

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term
Action 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiate a Human Resource and Staff Education Audit and consider incorporating the following into the audit:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Review of staff education on accessibility.○ Provide training for staff to ensure plan reviews are completed using an accessibility lens.○ Consider making accessibility training available to community partners and the business community.

3.9 Accessible Development and Building Services Audit and Actions

Objectives:

- Make accessibility the standard in development and growth related decision-making.
- Raise awareness with City partners so that they understand/know that accessibility is a priority for the municipality.
- Make the City of West Kelowna a leader by ensuring accessibility is a key consideration in planning decisions.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Short-Term
Action 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiate a Development and Building Services Audit and consider incorporating the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Develop an accessibility checklist (lens/resources) for businesses to complete/review when applying for a business licence. Include accessibility in the business licensing process.○ Meaningfully engage accessibility experts in all phases of design/review, planning, and implementation or construction on City buildings and projects.

MONITORING

Feedback Mechanism

The Accessible B.C. 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 has created 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 City staff 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 be able to monitor its progress on the journey towards an accessible community using accountability mechanisms such as:

- **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 may receive updates related to actions completed and outstanding actions periodically.
- **Listening:** Continue to consult with the community 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 Committee, and public feedback.
- **Revisiting:** The City of West Kelowna's Accessibility Plan is a thoughtful and planned approach to accessibility; the City will plan to renew and update its Accessibility Plan every three years as required by the Accessible B.C. Act.



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. Resources permitting, the City of West Kelowna, endeavours to work towards a high-level Implementation Plan.

The Implementation Plan will be an opportunity for people in West Kelowna to engage in community-building, where accessibility 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.