Village of Kaslo

Agenda
Accessibility Committee
Monday, January 12, 2026 @ 4:15 PM
Council Chambers, 413 Fourth Street, Kaslo, BC

10.   ADJOURNMENT

    10.1   Meeting Adjournment
        Recommendation: *THAT the Accessibility Committee be adjourned at _____PM.*

Village of Kaslo

ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: 2024.11.04	LOCATION: Council Chambers – City Hall
TIME: 4:15 p.m.	413 Fourth Street, Kaslo

PRESENT:	Chair:	Mayor Hewat
	Members:	Councillor Leathwood, Russell Semenoff, Cheryl McKinnon, Alexandra Halliday
	Regrets:	Karin Fraser
	Staff:	CO Allaway

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:22 p.m.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Moved, seconded and CARRIED

THAT the agenda for the 2024.11.04 Accessibility Committee Meeting be adopted as presented.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved, seconded and CARRIED

THAT the minutes of the 2023.11.27 Accessibility Committee Meeting be adopted as presented.

4. Information Items

4.1   Review Committee Terms of Reference

4.2   Member Reports

4.2.1   Russell Semenoff explained that he would like to see signage for downtown businesses to let the public know whether there is access for people with mobility limitations. Sometimes wheelchair access is available but patrons aren't aware.

4.2.2   Alexandra Halliday advised that she has signage indicating that service animals are welcome and she will be distributing it to interested local businesses. She will also reach out to CNIB for guidance on how to improve website accessibility.

4.3   Correspondence

4.3.1   2024.01.12 re Temporary Disabled Parking Permit

Moved, seconded and CARRIED

THAT the committee recommend to Council that a Temporary Disabled Parking Permit program be implemented.

4.3.2   2024.03.20 re Hearing Loops

The committee suggested forwarding the information received to the Langham and the school.

4.3.3   2024.05.07 re Seniors Hall

4.3.4   2024.06.03 re Wheel Chair Swing

4.3.5   2024.08.21 re Transit Bus Parking

Moved, seconded and CARRIED

THAT the committee recommend to Council that signage be installed to reserve parking space adjacent to the Front Street Market for the HandyDART bus on Fridays between 11 am and 12 noon.

5. **Question Period** - None

6. **Business**

   6.1 **Additions to Draft Accessibility Plan**

   The following topics were identified for inclusion in the Draft Accessibility Plan:

   - *Hearing loss supports such as telecoils*
   - *Accessible playgrounds (access and equipment)*
   - *Public education regarding access to downtown businesses including a potential partnership with the Chamber of Commerce*
   - *Collaboration with emergency service providers*
   - *Locating handicap parking spaces on both sides of Front Street, connected by a crosswalk. This would benefit people with vision impairments as well as people with mobility limitations.*

7. **Late Items**

8. **Next Meeting**

   The next meeting will be held at the call of the Chair.

9. **Adjournment**

   The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

_____   _____

Corporate Officer   Committee Chair

ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 25, 2023	RESOLUTION #: 224/2023

PURPOSE: The committee is an advisory body established in accordance with the Accessible British Columbia Act.

Mandate

The Accessibility Committee is tasked with identifying barriers to individuals in or interacting with the Village and will advise Council on how to remove and prevent such barriers. The Accessibility Committee will provide input into the creation of an Accessibility Plan and future updates to the Accessibility Plan. The Accessibility Committee will consider the following principles in making its recommendations to Council: inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.

Reporting

The committee will report to Council as required.

Schedule

The committee will meet on an as-needed basis, at the call of the Chair. A schedule of meetings will be established at the inaugural meeting, and at the first meeting in each calendar year.

MEMBERSHIP: All appointments to voting positions must be made by resolution of Council.

Term

Appointments shall be for a 4 year term. Appointments may be rescinded at any time by Council and vacancies may be filled by Council resolution.

Composition

The majority of committee members shall have lived experience of disability, either as a disabled person or as an individual who supports a person with disabilities or is an employee or volunteer with an organization that supports persons with disabilities. The composition of the committee aims to reflect the diversity of the community and, to the extent possible, at least one member should be an indigenous person. All appointed members of the committee shall have voting rights.

- The Mayor of Kaslo or their designate
- 1 additional member of Council
- up to 8 members of the public

Staff may attend meetings at the discretion of the CAO, to provide procedural or subject matter advice, but will not have voting rights.

Quorum

Quorum shall be 4 voting members (one must be a member of Council) of the Committee.

RESOURCING:

The Corporate Officer or their designate will ensure that meeting notices are posted, agenda packages are distributed, minutes are recorded, and meeting materials are available for public inspection.

PROCEDURE:

Council may refer specific matters to the Committee at any time.
The provisions in the Council Procedures Bylaw regarding Committees will apply.

Local Community Accessibility Grants

About this initiative

Under the *Accessible BC Act,* local governments are required to develop a feedback mechanism, Accessibility Committee and Accessibility Plan.

This initiative provides one-time funding for local governments, of up to $25,000, to support the implementation of projects or priorities identified in their Accessibility Plan or in partnership with their Accessibility Committee.

Who can apply?

All local and regional governments in British Columbia can apply provided you meet the conditions of Part 3 of the Accessible B.C. Act.

Funding Streams

Eligible organizations can apply for funding **up to $25,000** and may select one of the following streams:

Stream 1—Local Government led projects	Stream 2—Capacity Building and Support
This funding stream is designed to provide support for local governments who have a clear project in mind that they would like to implement.	This funding stream is designed to assist local governments who are unsure about where to start in terms of implementing a project.
Under this stream are projects and initiatives designed to identify barriers and improve the overall level of accessibility and inclusion related to: • **The Built Environment:** This could include projects designed to improve the overall physical accessibility of existing spaces and places to better meet the needs of the community. • **Education and Awareness:** This could include using information and education as a tool to build a deeper awareness and understanding of the disability needs in your community. • **Policy and Programs:** This could include developing local policies, bylaws, guidelines, or other materials designed to promote and support greater accessibility and inclusion across different policies and programs. • **Modelling Inclusive Practices:** This could include undertaking a review of current practices and programs to explore ways to identify and remove potential barriers to participation. • **Communication and Engagement:** This could include exploring ways to strengthen current communication and engagement practices to meet a broader range of needs and to promote and support a deeper sense of belonging and inclusion. • **The Use of Technology:** This could include exploring ways to support more active participation and engagement of persons with disabilities in all aspects of community life (economic, social, cultural and recreational) through the use of assistive devices and technology.	Under this stream, SPARC BC will assist in the development and delivery of a capacity building workshop to be delivered in person or held over zoom with a focus on supporting your community in advancing shared accessibility goals. **Supports Available:** For those choosing this stream, SPARC BC will assist in the design and delivery of a workshop that will include the development of tools, resources, or other materials. **Identifying a Specific Project Priority Area:** Each of the workshops will be customized to meet the specific needs/ interest of your community and could include the design and delivery of workshops related to: – The Built Environment – Education and Awareness – Policy and Program Design – Modelling Inclusive Practices – Communication and Engagement – The Use of Technology **Moving To Implementation:** Once a project has been identified, SPARC BC will work with the community to assist with the preparation of the grant application form as well as help to provide relevant contact information, materials, and other resources.

1

Examples of Projects that You Might Want to Consider:

The Built Environment	
– Designing or building ramps – Adding elevators or lifts – Making washrooms and other facilities more accessible	– Making entrances more accessible including adding automatic door-openers) – Adding audio signals, tactile strips, hearing loops and other features

Education and Awareness	
– Participating in anti-bias training to develop knowledge of conscious and subconscious bias	– Training workplaces in service delivery to enable employees to meet a broader range of needs

Policies and Programs	
– Development of local policies (parking, housing, building standards, bylaws) – Funding for legal and consulting advice	– Development and implementation of local recreation or other types of programs

Modelling Inclusive Practices	
– Training to review and amend interview processes – Including ASL interpreting for events	– Accessibility audit of workflow – Remuneration for Accessibility Advisory Committee etc.

Communication and Engagement	
– Creating job task checklists in pictorial form – Creating wayfinding signage in braille – Creating an ASL version of information, training materials or policies	– Application forms accessible to screen readers – Reprinting hardcopies of material in large font – Update web pages for accessibility, etc.

The Use of Technology	
– Purchasing software that enables production of accessible documents – Flashing fire alarms for deaf employees – Specialized headsets	– A tablet for communication – Laptops for remote working – Buying specialized tools for workplaces

Funding

- All projects must be completed by the end of the grant program, which ends on March 31, 2026.
- Successful applicants will be required to submit a final report to SPARC BC by March 31, 2026.
- For projects $10,000 or less funding will be disbursed in 1 transaction of 100%. Grants above $10,000 will be dispersed in 2 transactions—80% upon return of the Terms & Conditions document and 20% upon receipt of Final Report.

2

Council and Accessibility Support

The project that is to be funded through this grant program, must be part of your local Accessibility Plan and must have the support of the local Council and Accessibility Committee. Please supply a letter of support from your Accessibility Committee. Council support can be shown in the form of a formal council or Board resolution, or in the form of a letter of support from the CAO for the local/regional government.

How to Apply

Proposals must be completed using the Local Community Accessibility Grant Program Application Form which you can find on SPARC BC's website.

The Province has allocated five million dollars to support local communities and regions. Applications will be received and approved on a rolling basis and are open from June 5th 2023.

Please ensure to provide a current e-mail address as ALL correspondence and documentation will be forwarded via this e-mail address.

Applications will be reviewed by SPARC BC and representatives from the Accessibility Directorate at the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. All applicants will be notified about the status of their application within three weeks of their submission to accessibility@sparc.bc.ca.

Need More Information

We know you may be unsure where to start or how to achieve your projects and we're here to help. Over the next 1-2 months we will organize:

- **Weekly information sessions—every Tuesday 10am-11:30am**
  We will have a drop-in zoom call to go over the details of the grant and answer any questions you have. These workshops will be offered weekly from **June 6th** to **July 25th**. You can register for the workshop on our website.

- **On-going Capacity Building Workshops**
  As we begin to work with local governments, we will be hosting regular capacity building workshops to educate and assist teams in their project ideas and planning. Please reach out to Lily, contact details below, to discuss the type of assistance or resources you may need.

Compliance Questions

For questions related to compliance with the Accessible B.C. Regulation please contact:
engageaccessibility@gov.bc.ca

Thank you for your interest in the Local Community Accessibility Grants Program. If you have questions, please contact:

Lily Connor
Manager—Accessibility Initiatives, SPARC BC
Phone: 604-718-7748
E: accessibility@sparc.bc.ca

3

Requirements for Local Governments under the Accessible B.C. Regulation

Local governments are among over 750 public sector organizations listed in the [Accessible B.C. Regulation](#) and are required by September 1, 2023 to establish:

- An accessibility committee
- An accessibility plan
- A tool to receive feedback on accessibility

These requirements are intended to get organizations planning for accessibility in a way that is informed by people with disabilities. They are flexible and there are lots of different ways to approach the requirements.

Accessibility Plan

- An Accessibility Plan outlines the activities the organization plans to do to identify, remove and prevent barriers.
- Organizations can determine the content of their own plans.
- Organizations must consult with the accessibility committee, and make the plan publicly available.
- The plan must be reviewed and updated every 3 years.
- **By September 1, 2023** local governments must have a publicly available accessibility plan. This can be a draft plan, a plan that the organization is consulting on, an existing plan that is amended to include accessibility, a plan developed jointly with others, a webpage with links to strategies and plans that already exist that remove barriers, etc.

Strategies to comply:

- Local governments could adapt existing plans or strategies, such as Healthy Community Plans, Disability Assessments, Age-Friendly Plans, Official Community Plans, or Diversity and Inclusion Strategies to include language on accessibility For example, the City of Nanaimo has included an "Access for All" section in their [City Plan – Nanaimo ReImagined](#).
- Local governments could choose to work together to create plan for a wider region.
  Local governments might have a web page listing next steps in developing their accessibility plan.

Accessibility Committee

- An Accessibility Committee provides advice to the organization on their accessibility plan and how to remove and prevent barriers.
- Accessibility committees should aim to have at least half of its members be persons with disabilities and/or represent a disability-serving organization.
- Membership should also aim to reflect the diversity of British Columbians and include Indigenous peoples.
- **By September 1, 2023** local governments must have an accessibility committee.

Strategies to comply:

- Local governments could adapt an existing committee such as an Age-friendly committee or a Healthy Communities Network with an updated terms of reference to include accessibility.
- Local governments could work with other organizations to develop a joint committee.
- Local governments could start small with a group of employees to be their first accessibility committee.
- Local governments can list their initial actions and intent to create an accessibility committee on the local government website

Feedback Mechanism

- A feedback mechanism provides a way for those in or interacting with the organization to provide feedback on barriers and the accessibility plan.
- Feedback received must be considered when updating the accessibility plan
- Feedback can be shared with the accessibility committee to support their work
- **By September 1, 2023** local governments must have a way for people to provide feedback on barriers.

Strategies to comply:

- This might be an email address, a webform, a designated individual in the organization such as a social planner, etc.

For more information please visit: Frequently Asked Questions about the Accessible B.C. Regulation for Organizations.
For questions about compliance requirements please contact:
engageaccessibility.gov.bc.ca

Resources to Support Compliance

1. DABC has created the BC Accessibility Hub website with shared resources that support all prescribed organizations. DABC also recently launched an Accessibility Toolkit that guides prescribed organizations through the process of establishing an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan and a feedback mechanism.

Scan the QR code on the right side of this page to access the Accessibility Toolkit.

Please reach out to DABC with your questions or requests for support: aop@disabilityalliancebc.org

Current Funding Opportunities (as of May 10, 2023)

- Local governments are eligible to receive free workplace disability management assessments, and up to $7,500 in funding to implement the recommendations. This initiative can help local governments meet requirements under the *Accessible BC Act* to have accessibility plans in place by September 2023. Please contact NIDMAR staff, Bill Dyer at bill.dyer@nidmar.ca with questions about this initiative.
- Age-Friendly Planning grants. Grants open May 16, 2023. More information can be found on the Plan H website

Future Opportunities
- Watch out for further announcements of funding during AccessAbility Week May 29 to June 3, 2023!

Developing Your First Accessibility Plan

A Guide for BC Prescribed Organizations

Acknowledgements

Legal Disclaimer

This guide provides general information only as a reference to support Prescribed Organizations in meeting the requirements of *Accessible BC Act*. Each organization is responsible for understanding and complying with its legal obligations and developing its own accessibility plan, committee, and feedback mechanism based on its particular situation.

Accessibility Statement

This guide is accessible to PDF/UA standards. If you require an alternative format, you can contact Disability Alliance BC to request one: **aop@disabilityalliancebc.org**.

To report errors or give feedback please send an email to Disability Alliance BC: **aop@disabilityalliancebc.org**.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Disability Alliance BC's offices are located on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. This work is intended to support organizations reaching across the traditional territories of more than 200 distinct First Nations within the province of British Columbia.

Table of Contents

Foreword

Since 1977, Disability Alliance BC (DABC) has been a provincial, cross-disability voice in British Columbia. Our mission is to support people, with all disabilities, to live with dignity, independence and as equal and full participants in the community. We champion issues impacting the lives of people with disabilities through our direct services, community partnerships, advocacy, research and publications.

We are pleased to be partnering with the BC Government on the Accessible Organizations Project. In May 2022, the BC Government provided $3 million over three years to DABC to connect with partners and collaborators in each sector to develop resources and support organizations prescribed under Part 3 of the *Accessible BC Act*. Part 3 sets out three key requirements of public sector organizations: to establish an accessibility committee, develop an accessibility plan, and a tool to receive feedback on accessibility. When fully implemented, these three requirements will foster a more accessible British Columbia, one in which the spirit of "nothing about us, without us" is enshrined within how the public sector plans and delivers their services.

Creation of this guidebook is a result of many rounds of dialogue across the public sector over the past several months since the Accessible Organizations Project began. Combined with templates, workshops, training and the BC Accessibility Hub website, this guidebook is part of a larger effort to develop resources to support Prescribed Organizations across the public sector in BC. We are grateful to our partner organizations who have stepped forward to help disseminate information to their sector members, and to help our Project Manager, Dr. Mike Prescott, to identify the best ways to support compliance.

While compliance of these three requirements under Part 3 of the *Accessible BC Act* could easily devolve into a box-ticking exercise, we have developed this guidebook to give you the knowledge and tools needed to go through this in a

meaningful and intentional way. For those organizations who are approaching accessibility work for the first time, I want to say, this is important and rewarding work. I want to thank you in advance for the work you will do and for the ways it will make our province a more inclusive and accessible place.

It is also important to recognize that meeting these three requirements will not be perfect in the first instance, or at anytime in the future. Rather, a continued review and feedback approach that involves people with disabilities as collaborators throughout the process will ensure that as access needs evolve over time, so does meaningful progress towards greater accessibility in our province.

We are all new to this work, and we view this guide as the first edition. We look forward to continuing our support of Prescribed Organizations, seeing your completed accessibility plans, and incorporating your learnings into future guides and resources. Please do reach out to DABC if you have any questions, comments or learnings to share.

Helaine Boyd
Executive Director of Disability Alliance BC

Purpose of this Guide

Who is this guide for?

Developing Your First Accessibility Plan: A Guide for BC Prescribed Organizations will help staff who have been assigned the task of coordinating or acting as project manager to prepare the organization's first accessibility plan.

This guide focuses on preparing and writing your plan. There will be some general guidance on how to set up a committee and a feedback mechanism, including several templates we have provided in the appendices.

Organizations who do not fall under the *Accessible BC Act (The Act)* may also wish to use this guide to develop their own accessibility plan and we encourage them to do so.

However, if your organization is regulated outside of BC, please check with your provincial or territorial government to learn of your local requirements. If your organization is a federally regulated entity and therefore governed by the Accessible Canada Act, you can visit the Government of Canada website. What is the *Accessible BC Act*?

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* received royal assent on June 17, 2021. *The Act* is an important piece of enabling legislation that paves the way for future standards that will address barriers to access for people with disabilities in a range of areas.

Part 3 of *The Act* describes requirements for government and the other Prescribed Organizations to address accessibility. Part 3 of the *Accessible BC Act* requires organizations listed in the regulation to:

- Establish an accessibility committee
- Develop an accessibility plan
- Create a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility.

The BC Government has already delivered on the key requirements for its own operations, having created its own accessibility plan, a Provincial Accessibility Committee, and a feedback mechanism.

What is the *Accessible BC Regulation*?

The *Accessible BC Regulation* was approved on April 14, 2022. It is important because it lists the public sector organizations that must comply with Part 3 of *The Act*, as well as the deadline for each organization.

What is a Prescribed Organization?

Prescribed Organizations are public sector organizations named in the *Accessible BC Regulation*. For the rest of this guide, we will refer to Prescribed Organizations simply as Organizations.

Did You Know?

The *Accessible BC Regulation* covers:
- 160+Local Governments
- 70+Public Libraries
- 11 Municipal Police Departments
- 60 Public School Boards including francophone
- 368 Independent Schools
- 25 Post-Secondary Institutions
- 30 Provincial Crown agencies and Tribunals

Deadlines for Compliance

There are two groups of Organizations with staggered deadlines. Generally, most public sector organizations have until September 1, 2023. Some others have an additional 1 year, with a deadline of September 1, 2024.

September 1, 2023
- Education sector (post-secondary, school boards, private schools)
- Municipal governments and regional districts
- Libraries
- Municipal police
- Some Crown Agencies

September 1, 2024
- Health Authorities
- Some Crown Agencies and Tribunals

A full list of organizations and deadlines are detailed in the *Accessible BC Regulation*.

Key Attributes of *The Act*

While *The Act* gives specific details on some points, overall, the requirements are not overly prescriptive, and leave much room for flexibility and interpretation.

For example, the regulation requires that you use specific guiding principles in how you develop your plan, but it doesn't prescribe the plan headings you must include.

Similarly, while it is clear that the accessibility committee composition should include more than half of its members being either people with disabilities or those who work for disability-serving organizations, there is no minimum or maximum number of members.

Additionally, the regulation doesn't specify whether your accessibility plan and committee must have an internal or external focus. You could choose to focus internally on your employment policies and practices or look externally to accessibility barriers experienced by community members or customers. You have the flexibility to scope your organization's accessibility work to include one area or both.

The Government's own Frequently Asked Questions document encourages Organizations to find ways to collaborate with other Organizations. For example, a rural library could choose to partner with their local municipal

government on a single accessibility community-wide committee, or several small municipalities within a region may choose to partner with other municipalities within the same regional district to co-develop an accessibility plan. Sharing the workload and other resources including any budget requirements across Organizations would be beneficial for all involved.

Our hope is that committees and their plans will evolve over time and be more responsive to the accessibility needs of everyone. With this in mind, we understand mistakes will be made and lessons will be learned. If you are new to accessibility planning, we suggest you keep it simple to begin with and focus on the priorities of those you serve.
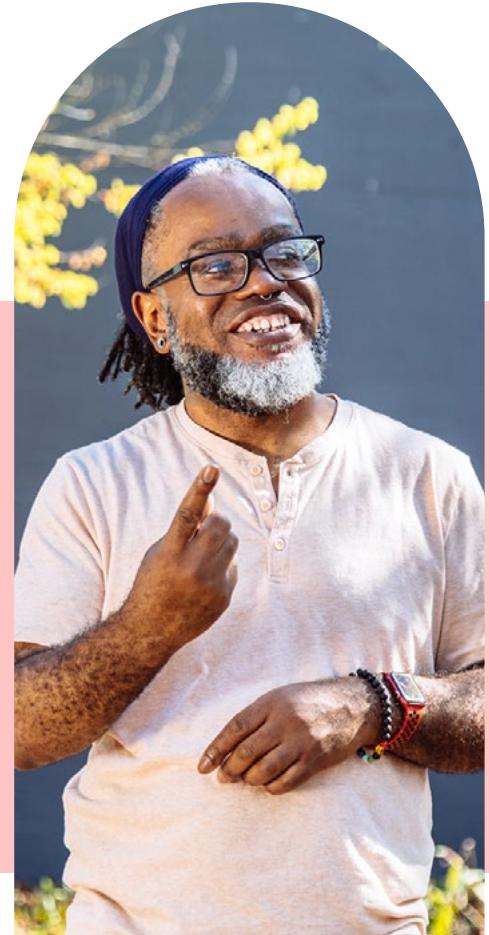
Did You Know?

In developing your plan, an organization must consult with its accessibility committee and consider the following principles:

- Inclusion
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Self-determination
- Universal design

See Appendix 6 for a description of these principles.

How to use this Guide

This guide accompanies a simple accessibility plan template (see Appendix 1). The accessibility plan template summarizes the heading sections you may wish to include. This guide explains more about what you must include and offers suggested areas to cover in your plan based on promising practices emerging from early adopters of the legislation, as well as examples from other jurisdictions.

The guide also includes a series of templates in the Appendix which you can use as your starting point.

Project Planning

As with any project, careful planning and meaningful engagement are essential from the outset. In doing so, it is helpful to consider some basic questions as you figure out how your organization is going to comply, or hopefully exceed, the regulations.

Who will coordinate or project manage your accessibility requirements? Who else needs to be involved?

Developing your accessibility plan, committee, and feedback mechanism may require cooperation across many functional areas in your organization. In some Organizations, there may be an existing staff position with the capacity to act as an internal coordinator, or you may decide that external help is required.
In either scenario, having a strong sponsor from the senior leadership level of your organization will be important to ensure that the project is handled with the sense of urgency and gravity required. Who is involved may depend on your organizational structure and available capacity so the suggestions below may not be applicable.

Who should you choose to lead the work?

Your internal lead for this project would ideally have the capacity to focus on delivering the requirements in time for the compliance deadline. The internal lead could be someone with an accessibility or policy background, or a strong generalist open to learning more about accessibility. As the project lead may be coordinating across departments (depending on the size of your Organization), often in areas that may fall outside their direct authority or influence, someone with an interest in building relationships across functional areas would be helpful.

In larger Organizations, the work of leading the accessibility plan may be delegated to HR or an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion lead. In other Organizations, a special projects coordinator or community engagement lead may be assigned. Ultimately, the lead for the project should try to get some background on previous accessibility activities and reach out to experts or champions in the community that can help shape the strategy.

Who will need to be involved

Your accessibility plan will describe to the public your Organization's efforts to identify barriers to accessibility and how you plan to remove these challenges.

In addition to naming a project lead, you may wish to create a project team, and include members of departments that are likely to be required to address barriers you will identify. For example, if your Organization provides public services online or in-person, leaders from these teams will need to understand the regulations and be prepared to respond to barrier information and to participate in developing the plan to address their removal. If you have staff who have already responded to customer feedback or complaints, involving them in the development of your feedback mechanism and plan will be important. If your Human Resources team includes back-to-work programs or disability management specialists, they may be vital resources to include in the project team. Finally, if possible, including an executive sponsor or senior leader who can provide feedback and support in resourcing the plan, their visibility as part of the project team would be strategically wise. If possible, include staff with disabilities.

As you conduct your public engagement or internal exploration to identify barriers experienced by stakeholders, such as clients or customers or

employees, you will likely become aware of issues in areas that interact with these groups. Because your plan must be made available to the public, you will likely need to follow your internal processes for developing public-facing documents and your communications team will need to be involved in writing or reviewing your plan. They may also wish to be involved in announcing when the plan is published.

When to start

A best practice from the principles of project management is to create a "workback schedule," a project schedule that details all the milestones and interdependencies of a project. For most Organizations, including local and regional governments, post-secondary and school boards, and some Crowns, the deadline is September 1, 2023. Health Authorities and some Crown Agencies have an additional year. You can find specific details about your organization's deadline in the *Accessible BC Regulation*. It will be important to create a workback schedule ensuring that your plan is developed and finalized early enough to accommodate your usual internal processes for community engagement and for developing publicly available documents.

In the next section, we'll go into more detail about the importance of maximizing the involvement of your accessibility committee early in the plan's development. If you want to involve your accessibility committee in your plan's design, you'll need to prioritize recruitment of committee members If you are planning to publish the accessibility plan as a new webpage, you may also need to build in time for your web development team to create a new page or section on your website. All these factors and more can impact your workback schedule.

Assess your starting point, what strengths can you work from?

The guidance from the BC Government is that Organizations are welcome to adapt their existing processes or plans to help them deliver on the legislation. For example, if your Organization has an Equity Diversity and Inclusion Plan that could be expanded to explicitly include accessibility, this is acceptable. If you have an existing stakeholder advisory body or customer feedback mechanism, it is acceptable to adapt these as well. An Organization that can adapt an existing structure can reach compliance more quickly than one that must start from scratch.

Assess any alignments with your mission, other priorities or similar experience

One of the most challenging truths of project management is that the greatest effort comes in helping people manage their response to change. By aligning this accessibility work as a positive and meaningful complement to current strategies or organizational values already well-accepted, you can support everyone's journey through the change curve.

What Comes First – the Committee, the Plan or the Feedback Mechanism?

The legislation is flexible regarding the order of implementation of the accessibility plan, the committee, or the feedback mechanism. Here are other considerations that may influence your approach:

- ❯ Do you have an existing structure that you can adapt, or are you starting all three deliverables from scratch? Any items that are going to be developed from scratch are likely to take longer and have a higher risk of taking more time than expected, so it's best to start them first.

- ❯ What level of involvement do you want from your committee? If they are expected to play a co-authoring role on the plan, you will need to develop the committee first. If the committee will only review a draft of a plan produced by staff, then getting started on the accessibility plan makes more sense.

- ❯ How often do you update your website, and what kind of process is required to add a page or a new section? Not only will you need to decide where on your website you will house your accessibility plan, but you may need add or make changes to your feedback form. If your website is difficult to update or updates are tied to a budget cycle, you may need to start implementing this piece sooner than you think.

Advice from Disability Alliance BC on Inclusive Committee Development

As a disability-serving organization with a long tenure advocating for the disability community, we recommend taking an approach that maximizes the involvement of people with disabilities in your plan development. We think that starting your committee as early as possible and collaborating with the committee on development of all stages of the planning process is a best practice.

In Appendix #5, you will find some recommended approaches to Accessibility Committee Development, which offer a spectrum of designs for accessibility committees' involvement from simply being consulted to co-authorship.

Guidance for using the Accessibility Plan template

The Accessibility Plan Template, Appendix #1, includes suggested headings and subheadings for an accessibility plan. The content was co-developed by delegates from a range of sectors, and also reflects elements from existing accessibility plans found during our research. The remainder of this guide references the same numbering structure, providing more in depth guidance for each section.

As the legislation is flexible on the content in the accessibility plan, the template provided is intended to offer a general starting point. You are able to scale up and down depending on your organization's approach and level of ambition.

Why you might wish to keep it small the first time

It's worth remembering that 750+ Organizations in BC are doing this work for the first time, and we expect that there will be much to learn for all. Setting your expectations to be realistic for your Organization's current capacity and knowledge level can help you feel more confident that the plan will be manageable. Starting small might allow you to have some early successes and build momentum for your next plan. Consider keeping an ongoing log of what you will expand or change in your next plan.

Why you might want to aim high

If your Organization has a track record for successful community engagement work or if inclusion is a key marker of your brand, you may want to be more ambitious in your approach. As an example, if your Organization has a long-standing accessibility committee or a reputation for providing good service to the disability community, it could make sense to use the plan's development to further your work as a great partner to the disability community.

On the other hand, if your Organization has had challenges delivering effective programs or services to those with disabilities, you may feel that your plan's visibility will be high so a very thorough plan with more extensive community involvement may be required.

Section 1
Your Introduction

The regulation doesn't specify what content must go into your introduction. You may want to consider the format used in other public reports issued by your Organization or follow the suggested subheadings in the Accessibility Plan Template:

a.   About the Organization

b.   Our Accessibility Story

c.   Message from Leadership

d.   Message from Accessibility Committee

e.   Acknowledgement of Key Contributors

f.   Territorial Acknowledgement

g.   Definitions

More specific guidance for each section will follow.

Tone and Language

In the spirit of accessibility, we recommend you consider using plain language, keeping the required Grade 8 reading level if possible. We also recommend you review this Plain Language Checklist published by the BC Government. Adopting a plain language approach will allow the widest group of readers to engage with the information.

Section 1(a) About the Organization

Relating your Organizational Mandate to Accessibility

Publishing an accessibility plan for the first time may draw interest from members of the public who are not familiar with what your Organization does for the community. To ensure that this new audience understands your Organization, consider including a short explanation of your Organization's mandate and a description of your services.

Explaining your Organizational Accessibility Purpose

Including a statement about why your Organization is taking on accessibility can help your reader understand any reasons beyond compliance that are driving the work. For Organizations who have been addressing accessibility for some time this will be easy to explain. For Organizations who are new to accessibility, the exercise of developing your organizational accessibility purpose can become the basis for much of your internal communications. This accessibility purpose may be useful when it comes time to explain to your internal team the reason for changes to how the Organization delivers services or when asking employees to make changes to how they do their jobs.
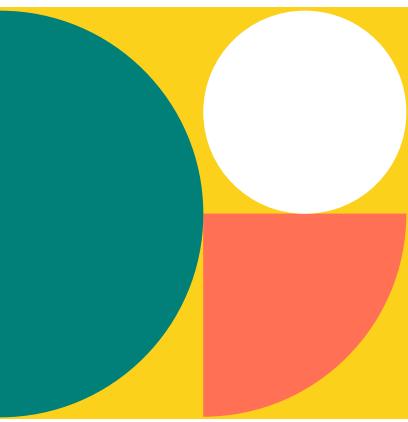
If your Organization is new to interacting with the public, and you are uncertain how to relate what your Organization does to accessibility for members of the public, we suggest you use Appendix 2: Exercise – Exploring How the Organization Interacts with Members of the Disability Community to help you develop this section.

Section 1(b) Your Accessibility Story

If your Organization has an extensive background in working to make your services more accessible, you may wish to include an additional section that details this history. For example, if your Organization already has a public advisory body that provides feedback on the experience of clients or customers who have disabilities, you can describe the Organization's experience to date.

Even if your Organization doesn't have an extensive track record in addressing accessibility, working with your accessibility committee to describe the touchpoints between people with disabilities and your services or programs can be a useful exercise. Use Appendix #2: Touchpoints exercise to stimulate a conversation with your accessibility committee or planning team.

Section 1(c) Message from Leadership

Just like other public reports your Organization shares, it is worth including a message from your Chief Executive Officer or other senior leader. Including such a message will signal to readers from within your Organization as well as the public that accessibility is a priority supported at the highest level of Organization.

Section 1(d) Message from Your Accessibility Committee

Consider including a message from your accessibility committee authored by the committee as a whole or by the chairs. This is an excellent way to profile your accessibility committee's participation and demonstrate a good working relationship. The accessibility committee can be encouraged to validate the plan overall and share what they feel is most exciting about the work the Organization has committed to.

Section 1(e) Acknowledgement of Key Contributors

Consider recognizing any key contributors who helped with the development of the plan. This is an opportunity to recognize internal leaders who rose above expectations to help with the development of the plan or committee. It's also a place where you can recognize community partners and/or peer Organizations that have shared materials or their own learning with you.

Section 1(f) Territorial Acknowledgement

Your Organization may already be in the practice of including a land acknowledgement in official public reports. The *Accessible BC Act* has requirements around Indigenous representation in accessibility committees, and it is now common practice to include a land acknowledgement in your materials, recognizing the Indigenous Nations on whose traditional territory your Organization operates.

While deciding on the language you will use in a land acknowledgement is no small matter, there are many resources to help you determine whose territory surrounds your offices or service area.

To determine the names and proper spelling of First Nations in BC, you can consult the First People's Map of BC.

For more in depth guidance on how to do a land acknowledgement the First Nations Health Authority recently published a guide to Territorial Acknowledgements.

Section 1(g) Definitions

You may want to include key definitions in the Introduction or include them as part of an appendix. The advantage to front loading this information is that readers who may not be familiar with disabilities or accessibility may have better comprehension of the plan.

Part 1 of the *Accessible BC Act* includes definitions of key terms in the legislation including accessibility, disability and barrier. These have been included in Appendix #6: Guidance on Language. The appendix also includes some advice about what terminology has broadest acceptance within the disability community, and some resources if you wish to explore further.

Section 2

Optional: Executive Summary

If your plan is lengthy, you may decide that an executive summary is helpful. If you choose to include this section, remember the principles of plain language, and consider using bullet lists of the most important items, or really challenging your writing team to aim for brevity. The City of Victoria's Accessibility Framework provides an example of what can be included in an Executive Summary.

Section 3

The Guiding Framework

As you develop your plan, you will need to decide on a framework that will help organize how you examine accessibility in your operations and how you explain this approach to stakeholders internally and externally.

A municipality may decide that their areas of focus will align with departments. For example, recreation facilities, public works, and licensing.

A university may choose a framework that follows the user experience for each of their key stakeholder groups like students, faculty, non-teaching staff and

community members. A Crown agency may choose a framework that divides accessibility considerations between online services and in-person services.

The legislation itself offers a natural framework option which is the list of potential accessibility standards areas named in the accessibility legislation. While not every standard area would be relevant to your Organization, looking at your employment and service delivery practices, built environment and information and communication processes would be a sound framework.

Eight Types of Standards

The legislation names eight types of accessibility standards that will be developed to remove or prevent barriers:

- ❯ employment
- ❯ delivery of services
- ❯ the built environment
- ❯ information and communications
- ❯ transportation
- ❯ health
- ❯ education
- ❯ procurement

An accessibility plan could draw from these 8 areas as their framework for their plan.

Section 3(a) Principles

The legislation requires that when developing or updating your plan, you must follow these principles:

- ❯ inclusion
- ❯ adaptability
- ❯ diversity
- ❯ collaboration
- ❯ self-determination
- ❯ universal design

The legislation doesn't provide definitions for these principles. See our Appendix 6 Guidance on Language for some starter definitions. Also, Whistler's Accessibility Action Plan includes their own definitions of the principles.

Section 3(b) Other Legislation

Though not required, your Organization may be familiar with other existing legislation that protects the access rights for people with disabilities. Mentioning them can help create more familiarity for stakeholders. The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy refers to other legislation that they have considered in their plan development.

Here are a few other pieces of legislation you may want to reference:

- ❯ UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- ❯ Canadian Charter of Rights
- ❯ Accessible Canada Act
- ❯ BC Human Rights Code
- ❯ *Accessible BC Act*

Section 3(c) Existing Policies

If you have existing policies that inform your accessibility plan, you may want to describe them here. If your Organization has an existing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement, it would be relevant to include this. If you have an existing accommodations policy that is becoming the foundation of your

accessible employment actions, you may want to reference that here. If you have a collective agreement that references inclusion of people with disabilities or accessibility, you may want to include that as well.

Section 3(d) Internal Values, Service Commitment or Vision Statement

Relating your new goals around accessibility to your existing values, vision statement, or service commitment can help improve acceptance with internal stakeholders. Help them normalize your accessibility goals by relating them to existing concepts that guide their work.

If your operations or customer service teams have any type of service guarantee, this may also be helpful to mention.

Section 3(e) Your Approach

Once you have explained the legislation and policies, as well as the framework or lens you are using to examine accessibility challenges, you can summarize the approach that you are taking to delivering an accessibility plan.

The City of Victoria's accessibility plan is a strong example of an accessibility plan that threads together the Organization's approach to existing values and policies in use at the City in a way that takes a storytelling approach many readers would find approachable.

Advice on Accessibility Committees

While the purpose of this guide is to support developing your first accessibility plan, complying with the legislation requires that you consult your accessibility committee in the development of your plan and that you consult them on the drafting of your next plan. In that spirit, we are offering some guidance on what the regulation requires, as well as some information about promising practices we are following at Organizations who have well-established accessibility advisory committees.

We've included a template in Appendix 7 of this guide to provide you a starting place for recruitment and management of an accessibility committee.

What the regulation requires

As mentioned earlier, the *Accessible BC Regulation* requires Organizations to develop an accessibility committee. The accessibility committee can be a repurposed consultative body you already have, such as a customer advisory body, an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, or other body that could expand its mandate to include accessibility. If you are repurposing an existing committee, pay special attention to the membership composition requirements in the regulation, as you may still need to do significant recruitment. At least half of your committee members must, to the extent possible, be people with disabilities or representatives of disability-serving organizations. The committee should aim to have at least one member who identifies as Indigenous, and overall, the committee must strive to represent the diversity of British Columbia.

The committee can be internally focused or externally focused, with members such as residents and disability-serving organizational representatives from your community. While the language in the regulation suggests the accessibility committee should play a key role in developing your plan, there is no specific instruction about the decision-making power or structure of the committee. This is important for municipalities and other Organizations that firmly differentiate between advisory bodies and committees with stronger decision-making authority.

The number of members in the committee is not specified and therefore is up to each organization to determine. You also have flexibility in meeting frequency to align with your plan development process.
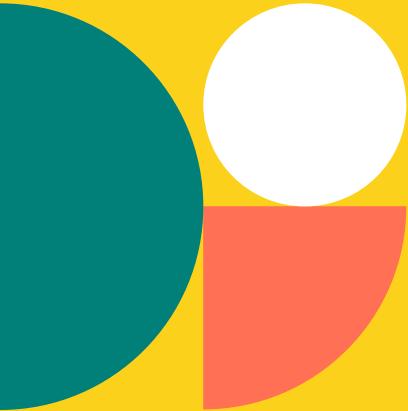
Did You Know?

You can satisfy the requirement for an accessibility committee by expanding the mandate of an existing EDI committee, a Health and Safety committee. However, you may be challenged to attain the membership composition requirements for lived experience of disability and Indigeneity if your Organization has not prioritized safe disclosure for equity denied groups in the past. Prioritizing safe disclosure for equity groups will support you in meeting the goals set in the *Accessible BC Act* for membership composition.

Accessibility considerations for your committee

As your committee will have several members with disabilities, you will want to prepare to offer accessibility supports throughout the recruitment process and at committee meetings. Please see Appendix #7 for guidance on how to make your meetings as accessible as possible by default.

Whether to pay committee members

The legislation doesn't require that you pay committee members for their time. However, to attract committee members, you may wish to set up an honorarium or provide gift cards to community members not attending on behalf of an organization. For more guidance on partnering with people with lived experience, consider reviewing these guidelines from the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction.

Section 4

About Your Committee

In your accessibility plan, you may want to include some details of your accessibility committee's focus as well as details about how you recruited members and information about who is on the committee.

Section 4(a) Initial Focus of the Committee

If you have not explained in your introduction how the accessibility committee was engaged or what kind of leadership they provided in developing the plan, this would be a good time to describe their scope. You could recognize that the best committees start small and build over time in scope and impact, and that this is an area that will likely shift over time and look different in your next plan.

Section 4(b) Recruitment

If your committee has an external focus or includes members of the community, it may help build confidence in your accessibility plan and commitments to explain how recruitment occurred. Consider describing the outreach methods and process you used to select members or to decide overall composition. You could also invite readers to suggest other outreach that could be done in the next recruitment round.

If you chose to focus the committee internally with staff members only, and no seats for stakeholders like customers or clients are included, some transparency about why and any plans to engage these groups in the future may be appreciated.
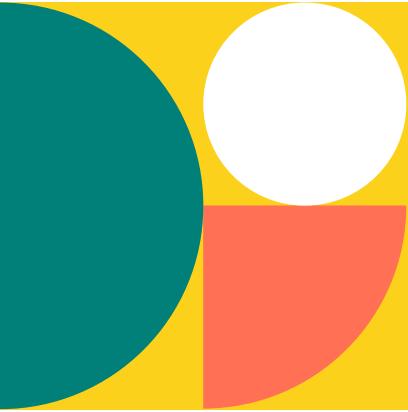
Need Help with your Committee Member Recruitment Strategy?

See the appendices for templates you can use for reaching out to the community, a sample application form, and template for the committee terms of reference.

Section 4(c) Committee Members and Background

Your committee members may appreciate the acknowledgement of having their names and bios profiled in the accessibility plan. However, if your committee is comprised of staff, or if you have members of the public who have privately shared at the committee level that they identify as having a disability or being Indigenous, it is important to ensure you are asking their consent to share such sensitive information in a public document. It's a key practice to get committee members approval on text that mentions them by name.

Advice on Describing your Engagement Strategy

The legislation does not require any public consultation beyond engaging your accessibility committee and comments received via your public feedback mechanism. However, your organization may have extensive experience with public consultation, or may have a strong culture of consultation, which may drive you to go beyond compliance to gathering feedback from the public, your employees and service partners.

If you do complete additional consultation, consider including some details in your plan.

If your organization doesn't have a lot of experience with public consultation but you have identified this as a good opportunity to start here are many great resources to help. International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)'s *Spectrum of Public Participation* was designed to assist with the

selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world. Please see Appendix 4 for a copy of their very helpful grid that suggests ways to engage the public more deeply in decision making.

Finally, you will also need to think about the accessibility of any virtual public consultation that you conduct. Simon Fraser University has created a helpful resource Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement which addresses barriers for community members from many equity-deserving groups.

Section 5
Consultation Conducted

Section 5(a) Consultations to Date

While extensive public consultation is not required in the *Accessible BC Regulation*, there are many strong examples on the federal level where organizations have shared their approach and activities that have engaged disability-serving organizations and the disability community. The Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) shares a good level of detail about the kind of consultation they conducted internally and externally to inform their 2023–2025 Accessibility Plan.

Section 5(b) Who was Consulted

Any consultation or community engagement you conduct beyond your own accessibility committee can be included for further flavour and context. On the national level, federally regulated VIA Rail's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan includes a list of eight disability-serving organizations who have provided feedback.

Section 5(c) How consultation was conducted

Whistler's Accessibility Action Plan includes extensive details about how engagement was conducted.
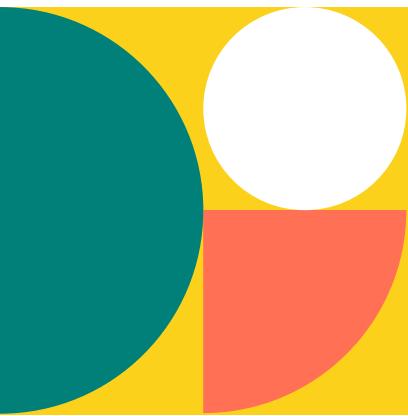
Don't let your community consultation get boring for you or your community.

Keep it fresh by reviewing Involve UK's Not Another Consultation! Making community engagement informal and fun.

Section 5(d) Key Discussion Themes

Consider including a summary of the themes that emerged in your community consultation to demonstrate how you received the feedback and note any key themes that are carried over to the accessibility plan priority actions.

Advice on your Feedback Mechanism

The *Accessible BC Act* requires that an Organization establish a process for receiving comments from the public on the Organization's accessibility plan and the barriers individuals experience within or when interacting with the Organization. The Organization must consider this feedback in future versions of their accessibility plan.

How you set up your feedback mechanism is otherwise up to your Organization. As mentioned previously, you may be adapting an existing feedback mechanism like a customer complaint process to also track accessibility feedback.

Though not explicitly stated in the legislation, it stands to reason that you will need to consider the accessibility of your public feedback mechanism. If your Organization has not addressed accessibility when you built your website, you

will likely have to consider offering alternative ways to report barriers for people with some disabilities. For example, if your existing feedback form on your website was not designed to be accessible to screen readers used by Blind users and some people with print disabilities, you may need to set up an email address and phone line linked to a voicemail box where those who cannot access your web form can leave their feedback.

The BC Government's landing page offers a selection of methods for sharing feedback and a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section that could be mirrored in your own process. The feedback form also clarifies the privacy expectations reporters can expect.

If your plan addresses internal stakeholders like employees, you will need to decide if you will invite internal reports to use the same mechanism as members of the public, or if you want to use an existing internal complaint process. This may be worth considering if you expect that some reports of accessibility issues may actually trigger your duty to inquire or duty to accommodate as an employer.

Like other forms of feedback, you will also need to design a process for ensuring someone reviews any incoming feedback and channels this information to your accessibility committee or accessibility lead for consideration in your next accessibility plan.

How do I know if our website is accessible?
Statistically, it probably isn't.

WebAIM reviews the top 1 million websites each year and finds 96.8% of home pages have accessibility issues.

To learn more about web accessibility invite your team to research the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

Section 6
Your Feedback Mechanism

You may want to include some details about how you have developed your feedback mechanism. This could be especially helpful If you have determined that you will take an incremental approach to the tool's development.
For instance, if your website is not accessible now, but you plan to include accessibility criteria in your next website overhaul in year two or three of your plan, you could be transparent about this evolution and then provide an email address and phone number for the interim.

Section 7
Identifying Barriers

The legislation recognizes that barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies. This framing might be helpful to keep in mind as you take on your public consultation or work with your accessibility plan.

Alternatively, you may want to use the forthcoming standards areas to categorize the reports of barriers:

- employment
- delivery of services
- the built environment
- information and communications
- transportation
- health
- education
- procurement

A strength of BC's accessibility legislation is that it centres the meaningful input from people with experience of disability. It's safe to expect that your accessibility committee will share their experiences of barriers from interacting with your Organization or similar organizations. They also will no doubt have very helpful information about how to solve these barriers.

While the most valuable feedback will come from asking people with disabilities themselves, you can research what a barrier identification process can look like by reviewing this Barriers and Possible Solutions activity developed by the Ontario government. It covers some very common barriers and ways to address them.

You may also want to conduct an internal review of possible barriers, informed by your discussion with employees. This could include a policy or process review, or an information and communication technology audit.
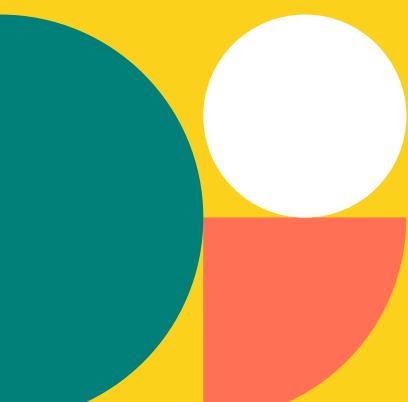
Have you completed internal audits related to accessibility?

Some organizations have completed facilities audits via Rick Hansen Foundation, or completed a Disability Inclusive Employer Self-Assessment? You've likely already identified barrier and perhaps taken action you can note in this section of your plan.

Sections 7(a) What We Found and 7(b) What We Heard

A simple frame for describing the results of your barrier identification process would be to include a section for the results of your internal engagement and a separate section for feedback gathered from external sources like your committee and engagement events. However, you may find similar themes from both groups. If this is the case, consider describing key themes in feedback instead.

Section 7(c) Actions Taken

If there are quick wins that you are able to solve before your plan is to be published, you may wish to highlight these in a separate section. This can help demonstrate momentum to your internal team who will be called on to help you address the items that will take more time or effort to solve.

Section 8

Your Three Year Plan

Remember your Audience

There are no specifics in the *Accessible BC Regulation* about what needs to go into your accessibility plan. You must make it publicly available, for example on your website. While the regulation does specify that the plan must be updated every three years, you can plan for a longer time scale, for example five or ten years. While this leaves much flexibility, it's worth remembering that the plan will be viewed by an external audience, and likely many who have a deep interest in accessibility based on their own experience with disability or accessibility barriers.

We can argue that this is the section of your overall plan that readers will likely search for first. Some readers may seek it out first so that they can see if you are addressing the accessibility issues they have experienced with your Organization and on what timeline.

While some of the earlier sections of your plan describe the process you have used to get here, this section should clearly describe your commitment to improve accessibility.

As your key audience includes the public, ensure that your plan is free of internal jargon, and that any abbreviations or acronyms are spelled out.

Formatting your Action Items

You may want to lay out your key priorities or themes for the actions you will take followed by more details. Ensuring that the actions come with a timeline for completion would also build confidence in your reader. Some Organizations may feel comfortable noting which department or member of the senior leadership of the Organization is responsible for delivering on the item.

Sections 8(a) Priorities and (b) Details

As we have consulted with Organizations, we have heard a wide variety of approaches to laying out the priorities and details of the action plan, too many to capture here! We encourage you to do in this section whatever works best with your approach and actions you select.

Advice on Prioritizing Barriers

Whatever method you choose for describing the barriers you have identified; you can expect that you will likely have more potential action items than you can address during the three year lifespan of your first plan. You will need to consider how you set your priorities.

In Appendix #3, we have included a brainstorming exercise you can use with your accessibility committee to identify barriers. It also suggests how you can begin to prioritize the actions to take, based on expected cost and impact.

Other factors that may influence which barriers become your priorities include:

Operational control/ authority

If many barriers have been identified that relate to your facilities or physical spaces, your ability to act on them and the time scale that will be required depends on how much operational control you have of your building. For example, if you own your facilities, you may be able to address the barriers with autonomy. If you lease your space, you may have to negotiate with your landlord to make any changes to the physical space.

If your Organization outsources facilities and management of those facilities is part of your lease agreement with your landlord, you may consider the added time required to bring those teams up to speed and get the work done within their own timeline.

Internal momentum

It's possible that the Organization has upcoming projects or process changes that will present good opportunities to embed your accessibility improvements as small additions to a larger process. For example, if your Organization has planned a website upgrade in the next 3 years, you may be able to have an accessible feedback mechanism added to the specifications. If your Human Resources department has a scheduled policy review, you may be able to include the following:

Cost

The cost of addressing the accessibility barriers will have to be considered. While some barriers, for example policy adjustments or staff training may not take much staff time or expense, some accessibility issues will require a capital expenditure or other financial investments. You may need to consider these as part of your annual budget process, which may push them down the priority list. You may also want to research grants to fund projects. While funding may be available for your accessibility project, the lag time between when you apply and when you receive a response can delay your action.

Impact

Consider the number of people who will be impacted by a given accessibility action. You may consider overall the number of people who will be

impacted by an initiative, for example, if all of your service centres lack proper signage to help Blind customers to find their way to the counter, you may have to prioritize the locations with the highest traffic or aim to improve regional access by choosing one service centre in each geographic area to improve first.

Timeline

As with any publicly available commitment, you may want to ensure you have prioritized some actions that can be completed quickly to demonstrate some movement, while also noting what you will tackle in year two and three of your plan's life.

Guidance on Involving your Accessibility Committee

Your accessibility committee will provide great insight into which items will have the most impact or should be treated with urgency.

Section 9

Monitoring and Evaluation
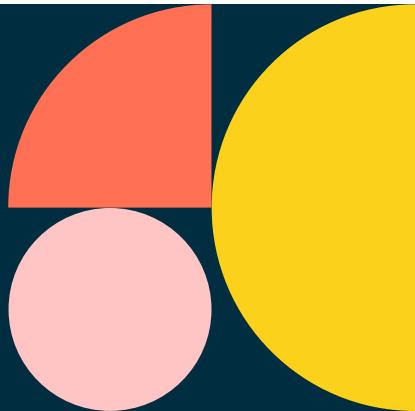
While not required by the regulation itself, describing how your Organization will monitor the progress and effectiveness of your plan is a strong practice.

Section 9(a) Monitoring

Frequency

It would be helpful for readers, including those internal staff who will be involved in the process, to understand how often you plan to monitor. Frequency of monitoring will likely depend on many factors including how often your accessibility committee meets. For example, if your committee meets quarterly, you may plan to review progress at the meeting closest to the anniversary of your plan's publication.
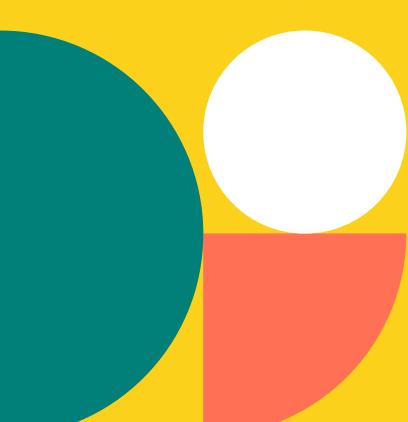
Alternatively, you may want to align your monitoring plans with your fiscal year, so that you can adjust any budget-related requests.

Organizations that publish annual stakeholder reports may also think about lining up their monitoring of their accessibility plan with adequate time to provide content on accessibility progress.

The City of Vancouver's Accountability Framework

The City of Vancouver's Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: A City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy shares a full accountability framework that will help keep their plan on track. It includes guiding principles and timelines for annual monitoring and reporting.

Work Completed

Your monitoring will likely describe what work has been delivered as per the plan and what progress has been made on items not yet completed. Sharing the monitoring cycle with the internal team may support their continued momentum.

Recommendations to Improve the Plan

You are likely to receive feedback about your plan and how it could be adjusted to offer more clarity. You may want to acknowledge that you'll be gathering this feedback as part of your monitoring process.

Publication schedule

If your monitoring reports will be made available to the public, you may want to commit to a specific date that the report will be made available. For example, you may commit to publishing an annual report on the anniversary of the initial plan's publication date.

Section 9 (b) Evaluating

In addition to committing to a schedule for regular monitoring, a clear commitment to evaluating your plan's impact on accessibility is important. You may want to work with your accessibility committee to determine how you will know that the priorities you set forth in your plan were completed and whether the intended impact on the accessibility happened.

Ensure this section includes a clear timeline for evaluation. Highlight how you plan to ensure your evaluation includes measurable performance indicators as well as the lived experience of your accessibility committee and other stakeholders.

Progress over Perfection

Our understanding of how to remove barriers to accessibility is evolving; new technology, better relationships with disability communities and understanding of the dynamics of disability.

For those who are new to accessibility, the wide range of actions that an Organization can take may feel overwhelming. It can be tempting to stall in the face of so much opportunity to improve.

Meryl Evans, a Deaf activist and LinkedIn Top Voice for Accessibility Advocacy thought leader provides her advice on pushing ahead so that perfectionism doesn't derail your accessibility work in her blog piece.
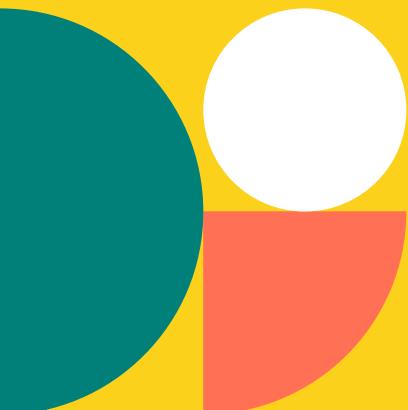
Section 10
Your Conclusion

Some Organizations will want to conclude their overall plan with a conclusion that restates their commitment to accessibility or include a summary of the key actions that were taken.

A conclusion could be a good spot to invite feedback on the plan or emphasize the next steps for the Organization.

The [BC Government's accessibility plan](#) includes a brief conclusion that restates key messages of their plan.

If your plan will include extensive appendices, keep in mind that the conclusion may get lost in the overall length of your document.

Section 11

How to Give Feedback

You may want to highlight the feedback mechanism in its own section so that users can scan the Table of Contents to find it quickly.

Advice on Publishing Your Plan

You are not required to submit your plan to the government or Disability Alliance BC. However, your plan must be made available to the public. And we hope that you will produce a plan that feels worthy of celebrating and sharing widely!

Where to publish your accessibility plan

Your public website is the natural location to share the plan.

What formats to offer

There is no guidance in the regulation itself, but the BC Government's own accessibility plan is offered in a variety of alternative formats including as an accessible webpage, an accessible PDF, as an American Sign Language video, and in seven languages other than English.

Ensuring your plan is accessible

Whether you choose to publish your plan as a web page or as a downloadable document on your website will in part depend on the existing accessibility of your website. If the website has not been assessed for accessibility or you know that the website is inaccessible, you may decide that an accessible PDF version on a simple page will be the best approach. This would allow you to also send the plan via email to users who are finding your website difficult to use.

If your internal communications team will be involved in the design and delivery of the plan, they will likely need to connect with an accessibility consultant who can ensure that the final plan is remediated and will work for screen reader users and readers with other print disabilities.

This approach is likely more manageable and cost effective than remediating the accessibility of the webpage itself. For example, if you wanted to publish your plan as a blog post and needed to ensure that the page was accessible, you would need your web developer or webmaster to be involved in assessing the page and website architecture. If you are curious about the degree of accessibility issues a user may experience with your existing site, you can use online tools like Web AIM's free WAVE tool or hire an accessibility testing service to provide a report for you.

Ensure any announcement is accessible

If you plan to announce your published plan on your social media channels, you can take steps to ensure that your announcements are accessible. Accessible Social is a free resource hub for digital marketers, communication professionals, content creators, and everyday internet users who want to begin learning how to make their social media accessible for people with disabilities. Small steps like including alternative text on images and capitalizing the first letter of each word in a hashtag are easy requests of your social media team that will engage them in the work too.

If you plan to launch your plan with an in-person or online event, you can also ensure that your event will be accessible. The City of Vancouver has shared much of their learning on this topic in a great resource titled Accessible events checklist and resources.

Section 12
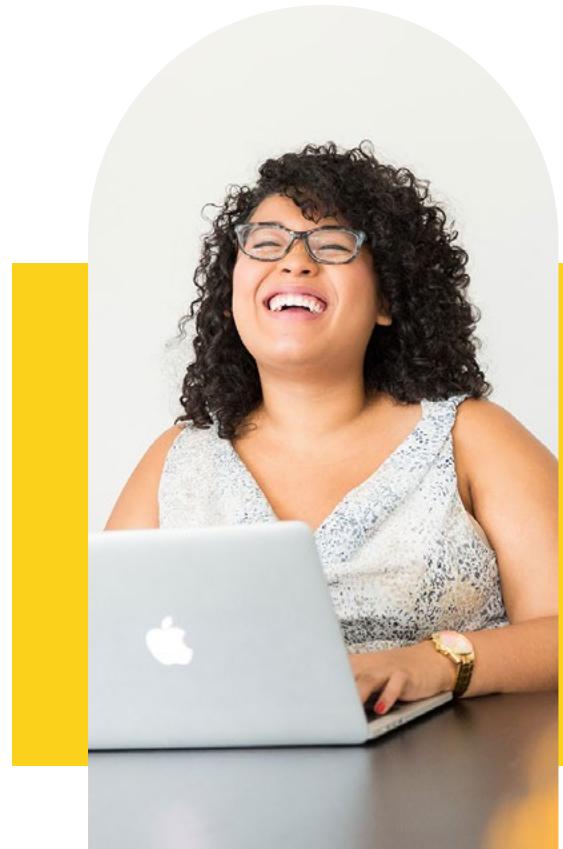
Appendices

You may want to include appendices with your accessibility plan. Topics can include:

- Glossary
- Committee members/ organizations consulted
- Research
- Resources

The Resort Municipality of Whistler included very detailed reference material with their Accessibility Action Plan, including their research notes.

The Waterloo Region District School Board includes the full list of committee members as one of their appendices in their Accessibility Plan 2012–2026.

What if You Need More Help?

The BC Accessibility Hub website is an ongoing resource where you can find information that will help Organization in developing their first accessibility plan and beyond. It includes samples of policies and accessibility plans from other jurisdictions, an accessibility consultant directory, and a list of resources.

If this general guide to accessibility plans is not tailored enough to suit your organizational context, you can reach out to the partner or collaborator organization for your subsector or email **aop@disabilityalliancebc.org** to make your request.

Funding Opportunities

For a list of accessibility grants that may be available to support your accessibility actions, please see the BC Accessibility Hub website.

How to give feedback on this guidebook

You can send your feedback about this guide to **aop@disabilityalliancebc.org**. We'd love to hear from you.

Appendix 1

Accessibility Plan Suggested Headings

1. **Introduction**
   a. About the Organization
   b. Our Accessibility Story
   c. Message from Leadership
   d. Message from Accessibility Committee
   e. Acknowledgement of Key Contributors
   f. Territorial Acknowledgement
   g. Definitions

2. **Optional: Executive Summary**

3. **Framework Guiding our Work**
   a. *Accessible BC Act*-Principles
   b. Other Legislation
   c. Existing Policies
   d. Internal Values, Service Commitment or Vision Statement
   e. Our Approach

4. **About our Committee**
   a. Initial Focus of Committee
   b. Recruitment
   c. Committee Members and Background

5. Consultation Conducted

    a. Consultations to Date

    b. Who was consulted

    c. How consultation was conducted

    d. Key discussion themes

6. Feedback Mechanism

    a. Feedback Mechanism Development

7. Barriers Identified

    a. What We Found (internal review)

    b. What We Heard (community/committee feedback)

    c. Actions Taken

8. Our 3 Year Plan

Summary

- Priority #1
- Priority #2
- Priority #3

Detailed Plan (if needed)

Action	Details	Timeline

9. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

    a. Monitoring

       A monitoring report will be produced on an [annual] basis and be delivered at the [first accessibility committee meeting of the fiscal year].

    b. Evaluating

       The organization will conduct a review and evaluation of the accessibility plan every three years from adoption [2025]. This plan will be made public on our website within [timeline].

10. **Conclusion**

11. **How to give us feedback**

12. **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Glossary
- Appendix B: Committee members/organizations consulted
- Appendix C: Research
- Appendix D: Resources

Developing Your First Accessibility Plan **Appendix 1**

Appendix 2

Exercise – Exploring How the Organization Interacts with Members of the Disability Community

The following prompts can be used for your internal team to begin thinking about how your Organization impacts the disability community.

Step One: Identify our stakeholders

In what ways does our Organization interact with the public?

Consider:

- Our programs or services
- Our buildings and other facilities
- Our online presence
- Our policies
- Our areas of influence – who we regulate or engage with regularly

Step Two: Group research

Assign each group one of the following sources to review. Give groups time to read through the following resources or search for other sources before coming back together to discuss.

Possible sources:

- Experiences of web users with disabilities from W3.org
- Article: The biggest barrier for people with disability is how society disables them
- StatsCan Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017: Data Visualization Tool
- Ontario Government's article: Disability and Physical Barriers
- Humber Fact Sheet: Understanding Barriers to Accessibility

Step Three: group report back

Back in full group, ask each group member to summarize the source they reviewed including 1–3 key points they took from the piece.

Step Four: group discussion

As a large group or by splitting the large group into two smaller groups, discuss the following questions:

    a. In what ways might disabled people have different needs or expectations when they interact with us?

    b. What barriers to access might people with disabilities experience in their interactions with us?

    c. How will we test our assumptions or anecdotal information?

Step Five: Archive your discussion

Make sure to capture your group discussion so that you can refer back to this exercise as you begin working with your accessibility committee or designing your public consultations.

Prioritizing Your Accessibility Actions Exercise

Step One: Start with A Guiding Question

Your guiding question could be "What barriers to accessibility and inclusion are present in our Organization?" Consider this question from the point of view of your clients/customers, your employees, and other stakeholders you may interact with.

Step Two: Brainstorm Issues Related to Each Type of Barrier

Break into groups and set up stations with each type of barrier at a station. At each station, provide post-it notes where brainstorming ideas can be recorded. This could also be done in an online meeting using the sticky note function found on the Zoom or Teams whiteboards. Some examples of considerations for each station (but not limited to) could include:

- Attitudinal Barriers (staff training, mentorship, hiring preferences)
- Information and Communication Barriers (signage, documents, captions, ASL)
- Barriers in Policies and Practices (emergency procedures, recruitment and hiring practices, flexible working conditions)
- Environmental Barriers (entrance access, shelf/counter height, plexiglass, bathrooms, lighting, parking, doorways, sensory barriers)
- Technological Barriers (assistive technology and software, accessibility checkers, ALT text, video transcripts)

Step Three: Consider the Importance and Cost

Organize the ideas using the following matrix. Consider what suggestions are most important to people with disabilities and what the associated cost of each suggestion would be. If meeting online, this matrix could be created on the Zoom or Teams whiteboards beside the sticky notes that have already been created so that they can be organized within the matrix. You may also need to read the suggestions out so that everyone can access the information.

Step Four: Consider Relationships Between Suggestions

Look for relationships between suggestions. Items of low importance may need to be considered even though they are not considered a high priority. For example, in the completed matrix below the implementation of an accessibility map will require an accessibility audit that was considered of low importance and high cost.

Step Five: Choose Actions to Include in the Plan

Decide on which suggestions are practical to use as action items in your Plan. Don't forget to consider the timelines, costs, and personnel that will be required to implement each suggestion.

Developing Your First Accessibility Plan **Appendix 2**
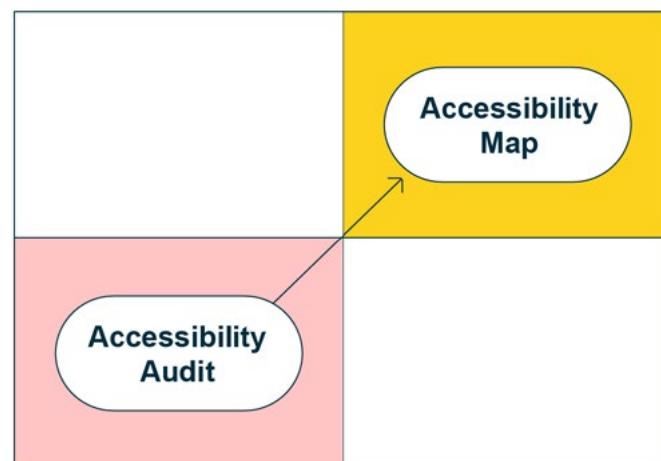
Appendix 4
Spectrum of Public Participation Model

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. Shared with permission.

Inform

Public Participation Goal

To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

Promise to the Public

We will keep you informed.

Consult

Public Participation Goal

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

Promise to the Public

We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Involve

Public Participation Goal

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Promise to the Public

We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Collaborate

Public Participation Goal

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Promise to the Public

We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Empower

Public Participation Goal

To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Promise to the Public

We will implement what you decide.

Engagement Approaches for Greater Involvement and Inclusion of People with Disabilities

Traditional Approach – Plan Partnership

1. The Organization recruits committee members

2. In collaboration, they draft a plan

3. A draft of the plan is published, and feedback is sought

4. The final plan is revised and posted

Guided Approach – Process Partnership

1. The Organization reaches out to champions/experts in the community

2. Champions/experts work together to create a preliminary shared vision of the goals and purpose of the committee

3. The PO uses this information as part of the official committee recruitment strategy

4. The committee reviews and revises the preliminary vision to create a draft plan

5. The draft plan is posted for public feedback

6. Feedback is incorporated into a final plan that is posted

Persons with Disabilities Leadership Approach

1. Community members with disabilities reach out to 1 or more Organizations in their community/region to initiate the establishment of a committee

2. Together, they develop a shared vision for the committee

3. Together, they use this for the recruitment strategy

4. The committee reviews and revises the preliminary vision to create a draft plan

5. The draft plan is posted for public feedback

6. Feedback is incorporated into a final plan that is posted

Appendix 6
Guidance on Disability Terminology

The *Accessible BC Act* includes definitions for some of the key terms related to speaking about disability. To consult the full list, see the Definitions section in the *Accessible BC Act*.

However, these are technical definitions that are related to complying with the legislation. There is no guidance in *The Act* on what terms are considered acceptable or disrespectful by the disability community.

Language preferences are ever evolving and can be highly charged. On an individual level it makes sense to ask anyone how they prefer to describe their identity and disability, as you write your plan, you will also need to make decisions about what approach to take when speaking about the disability community in general. For example, the BC Government and other government bodies in Canada default to using person-first language, for example, "person with a disability" or "people with Autism". However, many in the disability community prefer identity-first language. For example, "disabled person" or "autistic person".

You have options:

 a. Ask your accessibility committee for guidance and follow their lead. Because your community will likely not reflect all the diverse perspectives in your community, it is also advisable to address your choice and rationale somewhere in your plan.
 b. Follow the government's lead and use person-first language. Again, referencing the rationale for this may be wise.
 c. Alternate between person-first and identity-first language in your plan and note the decision to do so. This is an approach taken by DABC and some disability-serving organizations.

Principles in *The Act*

The Act includes a list of principles that you must consider as you develop an accessibility plan. These same principles were used to develop the legislation itself. We have developed some starter definitions for you to consider. They are adapted from the foundational document [BC Framework for Accessibility Legislation]().

- ❯ **Inclusion:** All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.

- ❯ **Adaptability:** Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change.

- ❯ **Diversity:** Every person is unique. People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and lived experience greatly inform the experiences of individuals. Accessibility plans should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the diversity within the disability community.

- ❯ **Collaboration:** Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Accessibility plans should create opportunities for Organizations and communities to work together to promote access and inclusion.

- ❯ **Self-determination:** Accessibility plans should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.

- ❯ **Universal Design:** The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design defines Universal Design as "the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability." An accessibility plan should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to interact with the Organization.

Further accessibility terms

You can find a list of accessibility related terms in the BC Accessibility Hub's Glossary of Terms and Acronyms. This list is a living document and will continue to grow over time. If you have suggestions for additions to the glossary, please let us know.

Further guidance on language from the BC Government

In addition to the Plan Language Checklist mentioned in the Tone and Language section, you also may wish to visit the BC Government's Words Matter Guide for more information about inclusive language.

Accessibility Considerations for your Committee Meetings

When you bring together your accessibility committee or engage with the community, it's vital to make sure each person's needs are met throughout the process.

In addition, keeping an open mind and being willing to offer flexibility and a sense of humour will go a long way in establishing and maintaining trust.

Recommendations for preparing meeting materials

- ❯ Ensure all written materials are in Sans Serif font, such as Arial and at least 14-point size.

- ❯ All documents must have light with dark text or dark with light text.

- ❯ Whether the meeting is taking place virtually or in person, ensure ASL interpreters and live caption services are set up beforehand. For such services, you will need to book services several weeks in advance. For meetings longer than 30 minutes, plan for two interpreters to ensure they can switch out periodically.

- ❯ For ad hoc or last-minute hybrid and online meetings, turn Zoom auto captions on.

- ❯ If providing honorariums, ensure you have the accurate information for each member beforehand so they can receive compensation in a timely fashion.

- ❯ Check in with members regarding food sensitivities and offer refreshments that keep the diversity of cultural perspectives in mind.

- ❯ Circulate an accessible agenda and other meeting materials several days prior to the meeting to give everyone a chance to prepare.

- ❯ Ask committee members what specific accommodations they need and provide a simple way for them to make requests.

During the meeting

❯ Start each meeting by revisiting an established set of conduct principles. Ask attendees to respect each other's privacy including each person's disclosure about their disability or other lived experience.

❯ Aim to use plain language in the discussion as well as in meeting materials.

❯ Ensure the meeting room has space for mobility aids, that there are ramps at the building exterior and wide enough entry points.

❯ Consider sensory sensitivities. As much as possible, create a scent-free environment. Choose a room that has minimal outside noise and options to dim or reduce bright lights.

❯ Ensure ample space between seats for service dogs and bowls of water.

❯ Minimize crosstalk before and after the meeting for people with auditory processing challenges. While getting to know folks is delightful, too many competing voices can be stressful for hard of hearing people as it may impede their focus.

❯ If the meeting is being held hybrid or virtually, make video use optional for attendees. Some people may feel more comfortable contributing without their cameras on.

❯ Some people may not be able to contribute verbally. Be prepared to support attendees who use chat instead of their voice or communicate through an interpreter or support person. When a variety of communication styles are in use, having a set speaking order may be helpful so that attendees are better prepared when it is their turn.

❯ When presenting images or graphs, describe the content in simple terms.

❯ Stick to the scheduled time and take scheduled breaks. Communicate the timing of breaks at the beginning of the meeting.

❯ Move unfinished business to a future meeting or via email rather than assuming committee members are comfortable with going over time. For neurodivergent people this can become a painful experience and for those that have booked transportation, staying on time is vital.

Follow-up

- ❯ Share minutes or recording in a timely fashion, with edited transcripts in 14-point font.

- ❯ Add descriptive text to any photos or graphics in presentations.

- ❯ Send honorariums or stipends the following day and make the process simple if using digital methods.

- ❯ Finally, and crucially: thank members for their time, insight, and expertise!

Further resources

- ❯ The City of Vancouver's Accessible Event Checklist

- ❯ The Government of BC's growing list of accessibility guidelines

- ❯ The Autistic Self Advocacy networks' Autistic Advocacy's Checklist

- ❯ Disability:IN: Blogpost about benefits of keeping the camera off as accessibility feature

- ❯ UBC Equity and Inclusion Office's guidelines for hosting inclusive events

Accessibility Committee
Terms of Reference Template

Name of Committee

Consider choosing a name that reflects your purpose and goals.

Vision/Goal Statement

This statement could identify your overall goal and refer to the *Accessible BC Act*.

Statement of Commitment

This statement should identify your commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. As well, acknowledging the importance of the disability community's lived experience could be highlighted.

Background

Include an overview of any background information that may relate to the creation or involvement of the committee including:

- Overview of Organization – include a brief statement about the Organization's purpose and/or history

- Accountability – if the committee is structured to be accountable to an outside entity, it could be stated here

- Areas of Focus – you may want to refer to the accessibility barriers that will be of greatest priority to the committee. Some topics for consideration include employment, delivery of services, built environment, information and communication, transportation, health education, and procurement

- Definitions – include words that may require defining, such as 'barriers' or 'disability'

Purpose of the Committee

In this section, the main goals and the benefits of the accessibility committee could be outlined. These goals could include Identifying barriers and implementing strategies to remove them.

Scope and Composition

Member names, qualifications, and roles could be included here. As well, if there will be voting and non-voting members this may be indicated. Any outside consultations or sub-committees/working groups could also be outlined here.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section would outline the expectations of the Chair and of the committee members. Considerations that could be included are:

- Code of Conduct – some suggestions include acting with integrity and honesty, being prepared and informed of relevant issues, using active listening and being tolerant of others' opinions, interacting with others in a respectful and inclusive manner

- Confidentiality

- Conflict of Interest

- Attendance Requirements

- Terms of Service, Renewal, and Termination

Procedures

Meeting expectations and processes would be outlined here. Some suggestions include:

- Meetings – considerations include length, frequency, location

- Meeting Quorum and Voting Rules

- Staff Resources – any resources that will be used to support the committee could be indicated here. Considerations include technical support, clerical support, website access

- Remuneration – it is recommended that any members who are not compensated elsewhere receive remuneration for their involvement on the committee

❯ Budget – funding could be allocated to support removal of barriers, public feedback events, interpreters, assistive technology, and technical services/software

❯ Communication and Reporting Procedures – this would outline how the work of the committee, such as agendas and minutes, will be reported and where. Many Organizations allocate a page on their website for the accessibility committee to share information and resources.

❯ Policy Review Schedule – try to incorporate a regular review schedule. This schedule could be aligned with the accessibility plan review, that must occur every three years.

Accessibility Committee Recruitment Poster and Application Form

Do you want to help make BC more accessible?

We are recruiting people with lived and learned accessibility experience to join our <Committee Name> that has been created in support of the *Accessible BC Act*. We are also looking for members who represent the diversity of British Columbia, including those who are Indigenous.

Committee members will work together to:

- Identify, prevent, and eliminate barriers to accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities
- Contribute to development of an Accessibility Plan for our organization
- <other specific goals could be added here>.

The Committee will meet <virtually/in-person> <meeting frequency> over a <# of-years> term. Members who are not compensated elsewhere, will be compensated <amount/frequency> in recognition of sharing their experiences and knowledge.

Accommodations are available if needed. See below.

To apply, please fill out the following form.

For more information or to request an alternate format of the form, please contact <contact name, phone, email>.

(Committee Name) Application Form

Full Name:
_____

Email: _____   Phone: _____

Street Address: _____   Postal Code: _____

What target group(s) do you represent?

- ☐ A person with a visible or invisible disability; including physical, cognitive, perceptual, and/or mental health disabilities.
- ☐ A member of a disability-serving organization
  Organization Name: _____
- ☐ A parent or guardian supporting someone with a disability
- ☐ A person with Indigenous background
- ☐ A person from another equity-deserving group

Why do you want to be part of this committee?

What related skills, knowledge, or experiences do you have that may benefit this committee?

What accommodations do you require, if any?

Date: _____

Thank you for applying! You will be contacted shortly.

This information is collected for administrative purposes under section 26 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). The information will be used and maintained for the purpose it was collected and in accordance with FIPPA.

Appendix 10

Accessibility Committee Membership Agreement

This agreement is made effective upon signature of both parties and is made between <Organization name and address> and <Committee member's full name>.

Committee Member Duties

The member agrees to:

- ❯ Work collaboratively to identify and prevent barriers to accessibility and inclusion, while creating and implementing the Accessibility Plan
- ❯ Show respect and empathy for diverse opinions and needs
- ❯ Attend all meetings and participate fully, sharing their skills and experiences as they relate to the topics at hand
- ❯ Review meeting materials and resources beforehand
- ❯ <other specific duties as they relate to the person or Organization>

Location of Activities

All meetings will take place <virtually or in-person> <frequency>.

Term of Agreement

The services of the member under the terms of this Agreement will commence on <date>and will continue until <date>.

Termination

Either party may terminate this Agreement at any time for any reason by giving written notice of at least one week.

Compensation

Compensation of (amount) will be provided if the member is not being compensated elsewhere.

Confidential Information

The member agrees to keep confidential and refrain from using, directly or indirectly, all information that is not publicly known and revealed during the committee meetings.

Conflict of Interest

The member will always pursue and act in the best interests of the committee and shall immediately disclose any conflict or potential conflict between their interests and the interests of the committee.

Accommodations

If necessary, every effort will be made to provide reasonable accommodations to the member at no cost to the member. The member will disclose known accommodation needs upon selection to the committee.

Signatures

Staff Lead Name:

Date signed:

Member Name:

Date signed:

Developing Your First Accessibility Plan **Appendix 10**   **70**

Barriers and Solutions Initial Scan

The best source of information about barriers to accessibility is people with disabilities.

While your work with your accessibility committee and future public feedback generated through your new public feedback mechanism will give you important information, you may have other sources on hand that can help with a preliminary scan for the Organization.

Here are some potential sources of information you may be able to access:

- Customer complaints that relate to accessibility
- Anonymized accommodation requests received by your Human Resources team
- Results of your Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Audit
- Results of your Disability Inclusive Employer Self-Assessment
- Audit reports from any website accessibility testing conducted by your web development or IT Team
- Anecdotal information shared by colleagues
- Feedback from community partners
- Feedback offered in exit interviews
- Results of any Human Rights Tribunal cases involving your Organization or organizations with a similar mandate.

bcaccessibilityhub.ca

2023 ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

ESTABLISH PROCESS	CALL FOR MEMBERS	APPOINT MEMBERS	INAUGURAL MEETING	DRAFT PLAN	CONSULT	REVIEW
JULY 11TH COUNCIL MEETING • Choose to participate in RDCK program or establish municipal committee **JULY 25TH COUNCIL MEETING** • Establish Terms of Reference	JULY 24TH PENNYWISE JULY 27TH VALLEY VOICE • Kaslo.ca website (Opportunities page & Committees page) • Village Bulletin Boards • Kaslo Facebook	**AUGUST 8TH COUNCIL MEETING** • Appoint committee members • Schedule inaugural meeting	AUGUST 15TH COMMITTEE MEETING • Committee orientation and review of Terms of Reference • Set meeting schedule for remainder of 2023	**AUGUST 22ND COUNCIL MEETING** • Present draft plan to Council • Add draft plan and feedback mechanism to website before September 1st deadline	SEPTEMBER 26TH COMMITTEE MEETING • Consider possible revisions to Draft Plan	DATE TBD • Review this year's progress, make plans for next year
JULY		AUGUST			SEPTEMBER	OCT-DEC

Village of Kaslo
Accessibility Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 About the Village of Kaslo

The Village of Kaslo was established in 1898 and is the oldest incorporated community in the Kootenays. With a population of approximately 1000 residents, Kaslo is known for its heritage character, lively arts and culture community, and spectacular setting with amazing outdoor recreation opportunities.

1.2 Our Vision

Kaslo supports a full, productive, and meaningful life for all citizens through policies, services and programs that respect community values of inclusivity, diversity, accessibility, and sustainable development. Kaslo is a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community that aspires to be a model for small, mountain communities across British Columbia and around the world.

2. Framework

2.1 Accessible British Columbia Act

The Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA) received royal assent on June 17, 2021 and in 2022 the Accessible British Columbia Regulation came into effect. Municipal governments are among the types of organizations that must meet the accessibility requirements outlined in the provincial legislation, beginning September 1, 2023. In order to comply, the Village must establish:

- An accessibility committee
- An accessibility plan
- A tool to receive feedback on accessibility

2.2 Our Approach

The Village of Kaslo has established an Accessibility Committee and created Terms of Reference to guide the work of committee members. The Village has advertised for committee members and has adopted the framework for a draft plan. The draft plan has been posted to the Village's website, and feedback from the public is being gathered. The Accessibility Committee will review the draft plan and any comments on the plan that are submitted to the Village, make suggestions for additions and improvements, and present revisions to Council for consideration.

3. Accessibility Committee

3.1　Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Committee were presented to Council at the 2023.07.25 Council Meeting and adopted at that time. As indicated in the Terms of Reference, the role of the committee is to advise Council about how to remove barriers that prevent individuals from accessing municipal facilities or services. In addition to the Mayor and another member of Council, there are 8 seats available for members of the public. Recognizing that not all committee members may be able to attend a given meeting, quorum has been set at just 4 members, at least one of whom must be a member of Council. Appointments are made for a four year term. Committee meetings are open to the public, and a schedule of meetings will be established annually.

3.2　Recruitment & Membership

Public notices calling for members were posted on the Village's website and bulletin boards, on Facebook, and in the July 24, 2023 edition of the Pennywise and the July 27, 2023 edition of the Valley Voice newspapers. As required by the provincial legislation, and reflected in the Terms of Reference, preference is given to individuals with a lived experience of disability (either a person with a disability, or someone who has worked with or cared for a person with a disability) or individuals who identify as indigenous. Expressions of interest were received from 3 residents and they, along with Mayor Hewat and Councillor Leathwood, were appointed to the Accessibility Committee at the 2023.08.08 Council Meeting, leaving 5 unfilled seats. Council appointed an additional member of the public at the 2023.08.22 Council Meeting, leaving 4 seats vacant. The opportunity remains posted on the Village's website.

4. Consultation

4.1　Process

The Accessibility Committee welcomes input from all residents and the draft plan is available on the Village's website, or in hard copy from City Hall. With the goal of reaching a broad audience, and including the perspectives of vulnerable or marginalized populations, the Committee has developed the following preliminary list of groups that can be invited to provide comments:

Interior Health Authority (care aides, physio)	RCMP & Emergency Services
Kaslo Seniors Association	Periwinkle Day Care
Kaslo & District Public Library Association	BC Transit drivers
Kaslo Community Services	Operators of municipal facilities (Campground,
Selkirk College	Arena, Community Garden, KORTS, Kootenay
Abbey Manor	Lake Historical Society/Visitor Info Centre)

4.2.1 Key Themes

The key themes that have been identified by the Accessibility Committee are as follows:

TRANSPORTATION – What should be done to improve transportation options, particularly for individuals that are currently facing barriers?

RECREATION – What should be done to improve recreation options, particularly for individuals that are currently facing barriers?

COMMUNICATION – How should public information be shared, in order to meet the needs of all residents? How should awareness about accessibility matters be increased?

FACILITIES – What changes should be made to municipal buildings or facilities to make them more accessible to individuals with disabilities?

5. Feedback

5.1 How to Participate

The draft plan is available on the Village of Kaslo website, or in printed form from City Hall. Members of the public are invited to provide their suggestions and feedback to the Village, either in written form (via mail, email, or hand delivery) or they may make a presentation to the Accessibility Committee. Written comments received regarding the plan will be provided to the Accessibility Committee for their consideration.

6. Barriers

6.1 Internal Review

A preliminary review of municipal practices and facilities was performed by staff in late summer 2023. The following barriers to accessing municipal services were identified:

- Many Village-owned buildings are old and do not meet current universal design specifications. For example, access to the top floor of City Hall is limited by the lack of an elevator.
- The Village's website does not meet accessibility standards
- Written material created by the Village of Kaslo does not meet plain language standards
- Print material created by the Village of Kaslo may not be accessible to people with visual impairments
- Village of Kaslo regulatory and/or wayfinding signage may not be legible to people with visual impairments
- Disabled parking spaces may not be clearly indicated
- Sidewalk encroachments may limit access for mobility impaired individuals

- Emergency plans may not address the needs of disabled populations

6.2 Committee Input

A walking tour of downtown Kaslo took place on August 29, 2023. Committee members identified the following barriers:

- Sidewalk congestion is a problem – amenities such as benches, garbage cans, signage, utility poles and fire hydrants, as well as vegetation, limit access for individuals with mobility impairments.
- Additional handicapped parking spaces are needed, near the bank as well as the grocery store/pharmacy. Parking spaces must be designed to allow an unobstructed exit for wheelchairs, with consideration given to curb height. Signage should face approaching traffic.
- Curb drops need to be aligned with the sidewalk and in some locations the slope needs to reduced for easier access. Additional mid-block curb drops (and crosswalk) on Front Street would be helpful.
- Bench placements need to be reconsidered – they currently limit wheelchair passage along the Front Street sidewalk, interfere with exiting the parking space in front of the Seniors' Hall and are needed near the Post Office.
- Sidewalk and pavement condition upgrades are needed as mobility-impaired individuals struggle with cracks, gaps and holes. Removable mats should not be used because they can shift unexpectedly.
- Front Street Washrooms are accessible but the toilet paper dispenser is hard to reach and a slower door closure mechanism would allow more time to get through the doorway.

7. Priorities

7.1 Goals

[to be determined in consultation with the Accessibility Committee]

7.2 Action Plan

[to be determined in consultation with the Accessibility Committee]

8. Review

8.1 Monitoring

The Accessibility Committee will review feedback that the Village receives regarding the plan, and will report to Council whenever the need for updates or changes is identified.

8.2   Evaluating

The Village of Kaslo will conduct a review and evaluation of the accessibility plan every three years, following adoption of the plan. The plan will be updated as required, with the current version available on the Village's website.