

**Accessibility Committee Meeting to be
held via Zoom and in person in Council Chambers
Wednesday, January 10, 2024
at 9:30 a.m.**

1. **Call Regular Committee Meeting to Order**
We acknowledge that Penticton, where we live and work, is on the traditional lands of the Syilx People in the Okanagan Nation.
2. **Adoption of Agenda**
3. **Adoption of Minutes**
 - 3.1 Minutes of the November 29, 2023 Accessibility Committee Meeting 1-2
Recommendation:
THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the minutes of the November 29, 2023 meeting as presented.
4. **New Business**
 - 4.1 Roundtable Check-in
 - Desrosiers 4.2 Review Feedback from Public Feedback Form 3-13
Staff Recommendation:
THAT the Accessibility Committee receive the Public Feedback Mechanism Responses for information only.
 - Desrosiers 4.3 Review of Essential Priorities 14-15
5. **Next Meeting**

The next Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled for April 10, 2024 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person.
6. **Adjournment**



Minutes

penticton.ca

Accessibility Committee Meeting

held via Zoom and in-person in Room A
City Hall, 171 Main Street
Wednesday, November 29, 2023
at 12:00 p.m.

Present: Trisha Kaplan, Chair
Leanne Williams, Vice-Chair
Kristi Bauman
Randy Boras
James Ludvigson
Heather Miller
Krista Russo

Council Liaison: Amelia Boulton, Councillor

Staff: Sarah Desrosiers, Social Development Coordinator
Hayley Anderson, Legislative Assistant

Regrets: Grant Pattingale

1. Call to Order

The Legislative Assistant called the Accessibility Committee to order at 12:02 p.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the agenda of November 29, 2023 as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

New Business

3.1 Round Table Committee Member Introductions

The Social Development Coordinator led the Committee in round table introductions of Committee members.

3.2 Committee Orientation

The Legislative Assistant provided a Committee Orientation presentation.

3.3 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee appoint Trisha Kaplan as the Committee Chair.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee appoint Leanne Williams as the Committee Vice-Chair.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3.4 2024-2026 Meeting Schedule

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Committee set the 2024 meeting schedule and time as follows; January 10, April 10, July 10 and October 9, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

AND THAT the Committee set the 2025 meeting schedule and time as follows; January 8, April 9, July 9 and October 8, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

AND THAT the Committee set the 2026 meeting schedule and time as follows; January 14, April 8, July 8, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3.5 Overview of Accessibility Plan

The Social Development Coordinator provided the Committee with an overview of the City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 contents and the creation process.

3.6 Enabling Accessibility Fund Application

The Social Development Coordinator provided the Committee with an overview of the Enabling Accessibility Fund, a federal funding opportunity, which aims to make communities and workplaces across Canada more accessible for persons with disabilities.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee recommend that Council support the City of Penticton application to the Enabling Accessibility Fund.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **Next Meeting**

The next Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on January 10, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom and in person.

6. **Adjournment**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adjourn the meeting held on November 29, 2023 at 1:04 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Certified Correct:

Hayley Anderson
Legislative Assistant



Public Feedback Mechanism Responses

January 9, 2024

Accessibility Plan Feedback Form Responses

The Accessibility Plan was published on August 15, 2023, as was the Accessibility Plan Feedback Form. This Feedback Form was created to collect feedback about the Plan in order to identify gaps and create knowledge which can be interweaved in new iterations of the plan in the future.

The questions and options are as follows:

1. How familiar are you with the City's Accessibility Plan?
 - a. Not familiar at all
 - b. Somewhat familiar
 - c. Very familiar
2. How important do you feel it is for the City of Penticton to implement the Accessibility Plan 2023-2026?
 - a. Very important
 - b. Somewhat important
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat unimportant
 - e. Not important at all
3. How would you rate the city's efforts in improving accessibility for people with disabilities?
 - a. Great
 - b. Somewhat good
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Somewhat bad
 - e. Terrible

4. Do you feel that the Accessibility Plan will impact the lives of community members in Penticton?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. If yes, how so?
6. Have you encountered any barriers to accessing or understanding the Accessibility Plan? For example, your screen reader is unable to read the text, unable to find a paper copy, some terms have not been explained, etc.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. If yes, which ones?
8. What suggestions would you have to improve the Accessibility Plan?
9. Do you have any questions about the Accessibility Plan? If so, please include your contact information so that we may get back to you.

One (1) response was handed in since August 15, 2023:

1. **How familiar are you with the City's Accessibility Plan?**
 - Very familiar.
2. **How important do you feel it is for the City of Penticton to implement the Accessibility Plan 2023-2026?**
 - Somewhat unimportant.
3. **How would you rate the city's efforts in improving accessibility for people with disabilities?**
 - Somewhat good.
4. **Do you feel that the Accessibility Plan impact the lives of community members in Penticton?**
 - Yes
5. **If yes, how so?**

- It is a good start for the city to have this accessibility plan. It will take more than what is covered in the plan however. The fact that the PDF for the plan isn't screen-reader compatible is a huge problem. This means that anyone who relies on a screen-reader must have someone else read it to them. Also, the zoom doesn't work well with the images.
6. **Have you encountered any barriers to accessing or understanding the Accessibility Plan?**
For example, your screen reader is unable to read the text, unable to find a paper copy, some terms have not been explained, etc?
- Yes
7. **If yes, which ones?**
- There is no readability with the plan, using a screen-reader. I just tried again. Very disappointing.
8. **What suggestions would you have to improve the Accessibility Plan?**
- We need a lot of physical changes in the city, to make it more accessible. When putting something in, we need to look at universal design. People with disabilities are the only minority where anyone can join at any time. Universal design is intended to be accessible from the start, which is much more cost effective. This form is also not always screen reader compatible.

Accessibility Barriers Form Responses

An online feedback form was created and posted to the Accessible City Webpage inviting feedback based on personal experiences regarding the accessibility of City services and facilities. Questions and information gathered will focus on the identification of barriers and potential solutions to help remove and prevent further access challenges for users. From the period of July 14, 2023 – August 8, 2023, over 20 responses were collected. The survey was reviewed and two new questions were added on August 15, 2023.

The questions and options are as follows:

1. Do you or does anyone in your family or social network have accessibility needs?

- a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What are the accessibility needs? Please check those that apply:
 - a. Visual
 - b. Motor / mobility
 - c. Auditory
 - d. Seizures
 - e. Learning / cognitive
 - f. Other
3. If you selected other, please describe.
4. Please select the types of barriers that you have experienced when interacting with the City
(select all that apply)
 - a. Architectural / structural / design
 - b. Attitudinal / social
 - c. Information / communication
 - d. Physical environment
 - e. Technology
 - f. Policy / practice
 - g. Other
 - h. I haven't experienced any barriers
5. If you selected other, please describe.
6. Tell us where you have experienced a barrier to accessing a City facility, amenity or service.
7. Please describe the barrier you experienced and/or how that impacted your experience.
8. What would you recommend to eliminate or reduce this barrier?
9. If you have a question about accessibility in the City, please include it along with your contact information below, and we will get back to you.

The raw and unedited responses of respondents have been listed below. Please keep in mind that due to our ongoing commitment to transparency, all comments have been added, including some that may be perceived as disparaging. These comments have been added at the end of each list.

Responses:

1. Does you or does anyone in your family or social network have accessibility needs?
 - Yes
 - Yes
 - Yes
 - Yes

2. What are the accessibility needs? Please check those that apply.
 - Motor/mobility
 - Motor/mobility
 - Motor/mobility
 - Motor/mobility, Seizures

3. Please select the types of barriers that you have experienced when interacting with the City (select all that apply).
 - Information and/or communication
 - The physical environment, Also architectural & structural
 - The physical environment
 - All of the barriers listed I have encountered..
 - Two different types one physical and one attitudinal
 - Architectural and/or structural
 - Policy and/or practice
 - Information and/or communication
 - Architectural and/or structural
 - Architectural and/or structural
 - Policy and/or practice
 - Changes to Transit route 5 (Main North) not clearly indicated to occasional users
 - Other
 - Architectural / Structural / Design
 - Architectural / Structural / Design, Physical Environment
 - Physical Environment
 - None and 9 people at a cost of what for nothing? Quit wasting money!!

4. Tell us where you have experienced a barrier to accessing a City facility, amenity or service.

- the City's website is difficult to navigate and find information even when I have a specific title or document I am looking for. It presents a barrier to effectively accessing the City's informational resources.
- Not at City Hall or other City facilities.
- No access to the water at Okanagan or Skaha parks. There's no way for anyone using a walker, scooter, or wheelchair to go swimming. Leir house and all its programs is inaccessible (stairs). The koi pond outside the art gallery is inaccessible (stairs). Only 1 of 5 washrooms on link road are accessible--look at Manitou Park for an example of universal design so that all washrooms can be used by all people.
- Accessing the lakes, particularly Skaha Lake.
- City Hall - handicapped spots in front are a challenge. South one- driver door at curb. Either have to park far enough from curb to go between car and curb to get walker from back of vehicle or step up them down from curb without walker. Ramp is in front of car so to get to ramp you need to take walker into traffic. North one- you hit driver door on metal box, and step out onto sewer grate. Community centre- to get handicapped access to gym. Walk to desk to check in and get fob, then go back across lobby to elevator at far end , then back across to scan in. At the end reverse to return fob. Special events - large areas are blocked off - no secure drop off areas for walkers and wheelchairs, no equivalent handicapped stalls created. Example car show entire lake front blocked - no replacement handicapped parking. Peach fest as well. No safe drop off for walkers and wheelchairs. I have lost the ability to attend Peachfest and I miss it.
- 1. The SOEC, 2. general for facilities and services, 3. Washrooms
- Several access points
- City of Penticton – Permits
- Recreational centre. The hours and closures are unacceptable.
- Yorkton crosswalk near Wilson St and Southwood Retirement Centre.
- Everywhere the Mayor and pro bike lane councilors have used our tax money to install their bike lanes.
- Handicap parking particularly along OK lake front is being taken up by non handicap vehicles with no enforcement Suggest a \$100 fine or tow away of non handicap vehicles

- Bus Stop & Shelter located on South East corner of Yorkton Ave had no signage or other indication that buses no longer served that stop. There is still no signage or indication that the stop is out of use other than that the panel which would normally hold the schedule details is empty.
- Gyro park bathrooms. The Japanese Garden koi pond viewing platform is not wheelchair accessible. Why? I don't know, but between that and the too high concrete wall, it's hard to see into the pond. The beaches. Not a single beach in Penticton has an easy access into the lake. The fire pits on the beach are not accessible. The disc golf courses are not accessible.
- The parking machines are too far apart, making it difficult to get to.
- The Library doesn't have accessible doors! Only one door has a wheelchair button!
- Pool
- The barriers I have are the incompetence of government And city officials thinking there doing a world of good but just wasting time and money.

5. Please describe the barrier you experiences and/or how that impacted your experience.

- Frustrating to be searching for something I know exists but cannot locate. Presents a barrier to being fully informed of initiatives.
- It's not fun to have a beach day and be the person who can join in the fun in the water. Even though I'm an artist, I can't participate in anything at Leir house.
- As a paraplegic I require assistance to get in and out of the lake.
- Limited amounts of businesses have power assist doors. Businesses do not have required number or required width of handicapped spots. Vendor parking in handicapped spot along Okanagan Lake everyday all day down by Wibbit. Even if they could block a regular spot that would improve access. Garbage bins - I need to hire someone to take them down to the curb.
- 1. The SOEC lacks benches inside and outside. For people who do not yet have a placard and who cannot walk long distances there are no places to stop to rest outside the building nor in the entrance nor when walking around the levels. 2. Accessibility to safe food that is celiac safe and safe for allergens. Ensuring that vending machines, catering and food services have safe options for disabilities related to food which is a basic necessity. 3. safe/ regular access to washrooms for those with medical needs such as those with crohns and colitis.

- I assist a person with a disability (Stroke related) and find that not all facilities are accessible to her as she cannot lift her leg as high as a stair. She uses a cane and not a wheelchair.
- I live in a Strata that has not followed the development policies in terms of enclosed balconies. The staff do not support or adequately respond to any concerns in terms of the fire and safety hazards related to these structures.
- It is difficult to use a walker or a wheelchair and move from the crosswalk to the sidewalk and from the sidewalk down to the street onto the crosswalk. There is no "accessibility" from the crosswalk up to the curb and from the curb down to the crosswalk. This is very dangerous.
- Problems with parking, avoiding large vehicles having to swing out into my lane to avoid the bike lane barriers and not being able to pull over for emergency vehicles.
- As an occasional user, I waited at this stop for over an hour before walking up to Peachtree bus stop where there was signage indicating that the Main North bus was no longer routed via Yorkton Ave.
- The gyro park bathrooms. Only 1 out of 5 bathrooms is wheelchair accessible, and half the time, people who don't need the wheelchair stall use the wheelchair stall. The design makes me feel like a third class citizen....Obviously people in wheelchairs only need one bathroom because they don't go out in public! The Japanese Garden. The lack of a ramp makes me think that the reason that there is no ramp is because the designer was worried a person in a wheelchair might try committing suicide by falling into the pond. Or that a person in a wheelchair couldn't appreciate the beauty of the pond, or doesn't deserve to see the pond. The beaches. The barriers are so many and so frustrating that instead of using the beaches in Penticton, I drive up to the Soorimpt Provincial Park and use the boat launch to get into the lake. It's the quickest, easiest, cleanest and most independent way for me to get into the lake. For me, being independent is super important, and not one of the beaches in Penticton lets me feel that way. The beaches in Penticton effectively tell me that I am not welcome or valued as a member of the community.
- Very tough to walk to.
- My elderly mom uses a walker and can't open heavy doors, she has to choose between walking down the long hallway (NOT a great option) or trying to open the doors. She can't go without me anymore which really frustrates her and reduces her independence.

- I want to get into the pool but I use a cane. There is no way to get to the stairs as I am told to leave my cane against the wall. Please help. This is a scary walk for me.
- There's no barriers just whinny complainers who want more or just aren't successful at anything good and just complain. And if it's such a problem why did you wait until now? Because there were no barriers.

6. What would you recommend to eliminate or reduce this barrier?

- Improve the accessibility of the website.
- I'm sorry that this feedback is only related to City facilities. The business community needs to make their businesses accessible.
- Get a path to the water at Okanagan & Skaha lakes. Get an entrance/elevator at Leir House. Do a better job when you put in public washrooms and follow universal design. Turn the koi pond steps into a ramp.
- I would like to see an access ramp with railings installed. Much like the one in Peachland that was created with the assistance of the Rick Hansen Fund. The East end of Sudbury Beach park would be ideal based on distance from parking and the new sidewalk installed there.
- Handicapped parking in front of city hall could be changed to similar to that by Gyro park. Business licenses could be tied to premises being compliant with provincial accessibility mandates being met. Any special event would need an accessibility plan - safe drop off zone, handicapped parking.
- 1. benches be installed around the perimeter of the building inside and out. 2. Ensuring that vending machines, catering, food services etc. have safe options for disabilities related to food which is a basic necessity. Any initiative or organization that the city funds or rents cities spaces to should have to meet standards to provide accessible safe food . Also the tourist organizations that are funded by the city should work with restaurants to promote safe cross contamination practices and to create lists for where people can eat safely. 3. year round safe accessible washrooms.
- Perhaps create a list of all of the barriers and then incorporate it into future developments and repair and maintenance plans.
- Increase training for staff of the legal policy requirements. These decisions should be made in accordance with the law not a staff member's bias. If there is an exception to the law it should be explained.

- Hire more staff.
- Construct permanent ramps from the crosswalks to the curbs so that people with physical challenges can easily access the sidewalk and crosswalk.
- Remove the bike lane barriers and use our tax money to repair our infrastructure.
- This Bus Stop and Shelter should be removed and relocated elsewhere. It is worth noting that the stop on the North East corner of Yorkton Ave where one should now board the Main North bus has only an uncovered seat. Clear signage should be placed at the South East corner advising passengers to board the bus at the stop opposite.
- For gyro park bathrooms, a total redo would be nice. I realize this is unlikely, So, for future projects, adopting principles of universal design is a must! Hiring a universal design consultant is also a must! Look at the bathrooms in Manitou Park in Naramata....they are all wheelchair accessible! For the Japanese Gardens, adding a ramp to the viewing platform would be an easy solution. Cutting the concrete wall in half or adding glass panels would make seeing the pond easier. As for the beaches, more ramps to access the beach, better paths on the beaches to get to the water, concrete paths into the water at multiple places would be a great start. Peachland has by far the best water access in the Okanagan! A dedicated ramp into the water! There are also beach chairs that the city could purchase and have available. There are multiple systems out there that help a person in a wheelchair get into the water, from soft carpets that wheelchairs can roll on over the sand, to mechanical chairs that carry the person into and out of the water. Again, hiring a universal design consultant is a must!!
- More parking stations or free parking.
- Put wheelchair, automatic doors on ALL city facilities that are open to the public on all the major entrances. (Especially the library)
- A bin or stand to leave my cane so I can walk carefully to the stairs. Where do people leave their walkers? This is scary for those of us that are getting older and need our devices.
- What cost is this and you know nothing is going to change other then a loss of funds. Stupid waste. Maybe put those 9 individuals to work cleaning theses disgusting drug crackhead ridden streets or maybe figure out how to keep these people off the streets????

7. If you have a question about accessibility in the City, please include it along with your contact information below, and we will get back to you.

- Are any of the 9 members of the new committee wheelchair users?

- Happy to talk with a committee member, if so desired. [REDACTED]
- Hi!! If I have ideas for how to make the city more accessible, who do I contact? How can I become more involved with creating a better, more accessible Penticton?
- Does this request go anywhere?

- d. Promote Task Force Members via Profiles:** Voluntary profiles were created to showcase the Task Force members and to learn who they are, their background and interest in accessibility. Profiles are featured on the Accessible City webpage.

5. Accessibility Barriers

5.1 Identifying Accessibility Barriers

Barriers can be anything that hinders a person's full and equal participation in society. They can be anything that prevents people with disabilities from being included. Barriers can be caused by architectural and structural builds, attitudes, beliefs and social biases, information and communication, the physical environment, technology and policies and practices.

The following are accessibility barriers that were identified through the Accessibility Task Force's Visioning Exercise, the Citizen Survey and some preliminary barriers identified through the Accessibility Feedback Form. A robust process involving City staff and the Accessibility Task Force was used to prioritize actions based on importance and feasibility. The results are shown in Appendix C.

5.2 Accessibility Priorities

The following summarizes the outcomes of the Prioritization Exercise, conducted by the Accessibility Task Force, to determine the level of importance of each barrier and the ease of implementing a and improvement or removal of the barrier, as assessed by City staff.

Essential Priority – High Importance and High Feasibility

1. Require accessibility training for staff
2. Create an accessibility policy to protect and assist staff
3. Examine the City of Penticton website for accessibility and summarize findings
4. Offer live closed captioning during City Council meetings
5. Create an accessibility advisory list to consult on City projects for accessibility
6. Ensure accessibility features are piloted with people with disabilities
7. Examine bus stops for accessibility and summarize findings
8. Examine progress reporting mechanisms both internally and externally

Significant Priority – High Importance and Medium Feasibility

9. Create an accessible notification system for emergencies
10. Create accessibility policies for City projects
11. Advocate to BC Transit for accessible buses
12. Geo-map accessibility barriers in Penticton
13. Undertake a public education campaign about accessibility and disabilities
14. Examine City services for accessible alternatives and summarize findings
15. Examine the City of Penticton's spaces for accessibility and summarize findings
16. Hire people with disabilities

Moderate Priority – Medium Importance and Medium Feasibility

17. Install wayfinding in City buildings
18. Examine bike lanes for accessibility and summarize findings
19. Meaningfully engage with residents with disabilities on a continuous basis
20. Create an Accessible Independent Resident Policy

6. City of Penticton Action Plan 2023-2026

An accessibility plan provides a framework and actions to identify, remove and prevent barriers for all community members and visitors. The City of Penticton created its Accessibility Plan in consultation with the Accessibility Task Force. A high-level overview of the Plan are outlined below in Table 1. Details on how these actions were determined can be found in Appendix D.

Table 1: Employment and Staff

	Action	Details	Priority Level	Identified Barriers
1.1	Offer accessibility training for staff	Education about disabilities, accessibility and adaptation, and barriers to accessibility.	Essential	Policy and Practice
1.2	Create an accessibility policy to protect and assist staff.	Include ensuring that current policies are not causing harm and creating biases in staff against staff with disabilities.	Essential	Policy and Practice
1.3	Hire people with disabilities.	Include ensuring that hiring policies are effective for people with disabilities.	Significant	Policy and Practice / Attitudinal and Social

Table 2: Delivery of Services

	Action	Details	Priority Level	Identified Barriers
2.2	Examine the City of Penticton Website for accessibility and summarize findings.	Complete an accessibility audit.	Essential	Information and Communication / Technology
2.3	Advocate to BC Transit for accessible buses.	Communicate the findings of accessibility engagements to BC Transit.	Significant	Physical / Architectural and Structural