

Accessibility Committee Meeting
to be held via Zoom and in person in Room A
Wednesday, October 9, 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 July 10, 2024 Accessibility Committee Meeting

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Recommendation:

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the minutes of the July 10, 2024 meeting as presented.

4. **New Business**

4.1 Roundtable Check-in

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4.2 Annual Progress Report

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Staff Recommendation:

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive into the record the report titled "Annual Progress Report".

5. **Next Meeting**

The next special Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2024 at 9:30am via Zoom and in-person at the Penticton Community Centre.

The next regular Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2024 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person.

6. **Adjournment**

Accessibility Committee Meeting

held via Zoom and in-person in Room A

City Hall, 171 Main Street

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

at 9:30 am

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

Council Liaison: Amelia Boulton

Staff: Blake Laven, Director of Development Services
Sarah Desrosiers, Social Development Coordinator
Scott Boyko, Public Works Manager
Hayley Anderson, Legislative Assistant

1. **Call to Order**

The Chair called the Accessibility Committee to order at 9:30 am.

2. **Adoption of Agenda**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the agenda of July 10, 2024 as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. **Adoption of Minutes**

3.1 Minutes of the April 10, 2024 Accessibility Committee Meeting

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the minutes of the April 10, 2024 meeting as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. **New Business**

4.1 Welcome and Roundtable Check-in

The Chair led the Committee in a round table check-in to discuss accessibility thoughts or challenges not specifically on the agenda. Staff noted the items discussed.

4.2 Delegation: South Okanagan Similkameen Wheelchair Society

Scott Richards and Bob Roberts from the South Okanagan Similkameen Wheelchair Society provided the Committee with a presentation on how the society came to be and the work they are doing in the community.

4.3 Park Sign Standardization

The Public Works Manager provided the Committee with a presentation on the new park sign standardization for review with an accessibility lens.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT after reviewing for accessibility and inclusion barriers, the Accessibility Committee support the initial 'Park Sign Standardization' put forth by staff for the development of new exterior park signage in City parks, with the consideration for the addition of a washroom indication symbol on the sign.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4.4 Sidewalk Construction Guide

The Public Works Manager provided the Committee with a presentation on the Sidewalk Construction Guide for review with an accessibility lens.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee, after reviewing the Construction on Pedestrian Facilities Guide 2024 and recommending that sidewalk closures be added in text to the website, support the City's approach to construction safety in the pedestrian environment.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4.5 Accessibility Plan – Key Performance Indicators

The Social Development Coordinator provided the Committee with a presentation on the proposed key performance indicators.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive the document titled "Accessibility Plan Key Performance Indicators – Draft" for review and feedback.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4.6 Review Feedback from Public Feedback Form

The Social Development Coordinator provided the Committee with an overview of the feedback provided through the public feedback mechanism that has been received to from January 2024 to June 2024.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive the Public Feedback Mechanism Responses from January 2024 to June 2024 for information only.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4.7 Action Log Update

The Social Development Coordinator provided the Committee with an update on the Action Log from the Accessibility Plan 2023-2026.

5. **Next Meeting**

The next Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on October 9, 2024 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in person.

6. **Adjournment**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adjourn the meeting held on July 10, 2024 at 11:08 am.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Certified Correct:

Hayley Anderson
Legislative Assistant



City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 Annual Progress Report

October 9, 2024

Introduction

On August 15, 2023, Council unanimously endorsed the City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 (the “Plan”), in accordance with the requirement of the Accessible British Columbia Act. The Plan aims to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility for individuals interacting with the City of Penticton, with the guidance of the Accessibility Committee.

This report provides an update on the progress of the Plan for the period of September 2023 to October 2024. It outlines the achievements, ongoing efforts, challenges encountered and next steps.

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 |

- The Human Resources Department is currently exploring standardized training plans for employees starting in 2025, such as mandatory training for employee groups. (Item **1.1**)
- Social Development Department staff have connected with Accessible Employers, an organization which provides employer focused tools, resources and access to training and events for BC employers on how to effectively recruit, hire and retain employees with disabilities.

- Draft Key Performance Indicators have been developed. They have been reviewed and endorsed by the Accessibility Committee and are being reviewed by City of Penticton staff.
- Provincial Accessibility Employment Standards are currently in draft; these Standards will provide specific requirements and regulations which will further inform items **1.1, 1.2, 1.3** of the Plan. Social Development staff attended one focus group, and one engagement session hosted by the Provincial government to provide feedback.

2. Delivery of Services

| Action | | Details | Priority Level | Identified Barriers |
|--------|---|--|----------------|--|
| 2.1 | Examine the City of Penticton Website for accessibility and summarize findings. | Complete an accessibility audit. | Essential | Information and Communication / Technology |
| 2.2 | Advocate to BC Transit for accessible buses. | Communicate the findings of accessibility engagements to BC Transit. | Significant | Physical / Architectural and Structural |
| 2.3 | Examine City services for accessibility alternatives and summarize findings. | Complete an accessibility audit. | Significant | Policy and Practice |
| 2.4 | Create accessibility policies for City projects. | The intent is a policy that requires accessibility to be integrated into City projects early and throughout the process. | Significant | Policy and Practice / Attitudinal and Social |
| 2.5 | Create an Accessible Independent Resident Policy. | The intent is to ensure that community members are able to use all City services independently and with dignity. | Moderate | Policy and Practice / Physical |

- Social Development Department staff are in on-going discussions with Communications Department staff to act on item **2.1**. Staff have met with Upanup staff, developers of the City of Penticton’s website, and have learned about the available options for accessibility audits of the website.
- Improvements to the website have been initiated, such as an accessibility assessment feature which reviews web pages in real time and offers examples on how to mitigate accessibility concerns that came with the Drupal 10 update for the website.
- An initiative to make the Road Closure webpage accessible for members of the community who are blind was initiated after Infrastructure staff met with the Accessibility Committee; the webpage currently provides map-based visuals which are not accessible to screen readers. Social Development staff is working with Information Technology Department staff, Communications staff, and Infrastructure Department staff to remove this barrier to accessibility.

- Social Development Department staff have connected with BC Transit to communicate the feedback received about accessible transit in Penticton, related to item 2.2, and have planned to connect regularly to share new feedback from the community.
- Social Development Department Staff have been in discussions with various City staff regarding current capacity for item 2.3. for future action.
- Social Development Department staff are investigating various strategies to integrate accessibility at the beginning of a project which are feasible and reasonable for the current capacity of City staff in relation to item 2.4. Social Development Department staff have assisted in integrating accessibility into the Skaha Entrance Sign Project, the KVR Masterplan, the Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Lakawanna Park Upgrade Plan.
- Social Development Department staff are investigating different policy models for item 2.5 for future action.
- Provincial Accessibility Delivery of Services Standards are currently in draft; these Standards will provide specific requirements and regulations which will further inform this section of the plan. Social Development staff attended one focus group, and one engagement session hosted by the Provincial government to provide feedback.
- Draft Key Performance Indicators have been developed. They have been reviewed and endorsed by the Accessibility Committee and are being reviewed by City of Penticton staff.

3. Built Environment

| | Action | Details | Priority Level | Identified Barriers |
|-----|--|---|----------------|---|
| 3.1 | Examine bus stops for accessibility and summarize findings. | Complete an accessibility audit. | Essential | Architectural and Structural / Physical |
| 3.2 | Ensure accessibility features are piloted with people with disabilities. | This is to ensure that accessibility features in the community are truly effective and serve their purpose. | Essential | Policy and Practice |
| 3.3 | Examine City spaces for accessibility and summarize findings. | Accessibility audit. This may include buildings, parks, beaches, roads, sidewalks, dog parks, etc. | Significant | Architectural and Structural / Physical |
| 3.4 | Install accessible wayfinding in City buildings. | This is the use of signage, colour and design elements to help occupants navigate a space. | Moderate | Architectural and Structural |
| 3.5 | Examine bike lane for accessibility and summarize findings. | Complete an accessibility audit. | Moderate | Architectural and Structural / Physical |

- Social Development Department and Infrastructure Department staff are in on-going discussions relating to items 3.1 and 3.5. City staff have begun internal assessments of bus stop and bike lane

barriers to accessibility. There are currently 261 bus stops, 46 of which have shelters, 140 of which have benches and 232 are accessible by sidewalk. The Infrastructure Department adds new benches and shelters to bus stops on an incremental basis which is based on available budget and staff capacity; the City can expect that new bus stop features related to accessibility are already built within the departments on-going efforts.

- Social Development staff are exploring different models of lived experience participation in municipal processes relating to item 3.2. especially relating to project engagement and participation in grant activities.
- The Social Development Department received a grant through BC Healthy Communities to conduct a community accessibility assessment of Penticton’s beaches with people with disabilities and seniors. This grant will also include progress for item 3.2 as it will focus on the participation of people with accessibility needs to guide the project.
- Staff are exploring different grants and models to further examine City spaces for barriers to accessibility for staff and community members to complete item 3.3.
- Social Development Department staff are still investigating the capacity for accessible wayfinding in City buildings for item 3.4 for future action.
- Draft Key Performance Indicators have been developed. They have been reviewed and endorsed by the Accessibility Committee and are being reviewed by City of Penticton staff.

4. Information and Communication

| Action | | Details | Priority Level | Identified Barriers |
|--------|--|---|----------------|--|
| 4.1 | Examine progress reporting mechanisms both internally and externally. | This is to ensure that both community members and internal staff are kept up to date on the items of the Accessibility Plan. | Essential | Information and Communication |
| 4.2 | Offer live closed captioning during City meetings. | Both online, on Zoom, and on the TVs in the Council Chambers. | Essential | Information and Communication / Technology |
| 4.3 | Create an advisory list to consult for City projects for accessibility review. | This list will consist of local individuals who have lived experience with disability and who will be available to internal staff to provide feedback on City projects. | Essential | Information and Communication |
| 4.4 | Geo-map accessibility barriers in Penticton. | This would be similar to the CommuniTREE Plan Map, where residents can pinpoint places in Penticton that are accessible and not accessible. | Significant | Information and Communication / Technology |
| 4.5 | Create an accessible notification system for emergencies. | Looking at where we can bolster our notification systems for people with different kinds of disabilities. | Significant | Information and Communication / Technology |

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|-----|---|---|-------------|--|
| 4.6 | Undertake a public education campaign about accessibility and disabilities. | Meant to remove biases and attitudinal barriers within the community. | Significant | Information and Communication / Attitudinal and Social |
| 4.7 | Meaningfully engage with residents with disabilities on a continuous basis. | The feedback mechanism required in the Act will play a role in this but may include other strategies for an open line of communication between the City and Penticton residents with accessibility needs. | Moderate | Information and Communication |

- In relation to item **4.1**, Social Development Department and Communications Department staff are exploring diverse ways of communicating accessibility-related changes to the community, including opportunities to participate and stay aware. Internally, staff are currently exploring the most efficient methods to communicate resident-raised barriers to accessibility which can be remedied.
- Social Development Department staff delivered a high-level presentation to the Penticton Leadership Team about the Accessibility Plan and upcoming Provincial Accessibility Standards.
- Currently, there are three ways to watch and participate in City Council meetings; 1) attend in person, 2) participate electronically through the Zoom platform and 3) watch live through the online platform. All Council meetings are recorded and viewable later in the week. Zoom is the only platform on which there is closed captioning available, only satisfying part of item **4.2**. Legislative Services Department staff have been working with Information Technology staff to introduce a new online platform for users to view the Council meetings. This new platform will have closed captioning available both live and for recordings. Staff are currently being trained to use this platform.
- Social Development Department staff worked with the Accessibility Committee to explore different mechanisms for City projects to be reviewed with an accessibility lens by people with a lived experience of disability and accessibility needs to complete item **4.3**. The Accessibility Committee reviewed and endorsed the Accessibility Advisory Process, a process whereby City staff can present projects, processes, and policies to the Accessibility Committee for feedback. The process has also been reviewed by Legislative Services Department staff. The Accessibility Advisory Process was presented to the Penticton Leadership Team for their awareness of the process. The Accessibility Committee has reviewed four (4) projects and processes thus far: Event Accessibility, Accessible Pedestrian Signals Program, Park Sign Standardization and Sidewalk Construction Guide. City staff were able to receive valuable insights relating to accessibility.
- Social Development Department, Information Technology Department and Communications Department staff are investigating geo-mapping accessibility barriers and accessible ways of communicating during emergencies for future actions. (Items **4.4 and 4.5**)
- Communications, Recreation, Infrastructure and Social Development staff worked together to engage in a short public education campaign about accessibility-focused initiatives at the City during AccessAbility Week 2024. (Item **4.6**)

- Staff have been able to engage with residents with disabilities (Item 4.7) through various means including the public feedback mechanisms, discussions at Council Open Houses, phone calls, emails and inviting community members to attend accessibility-focused events.
- Draft Key Performance Indicators have been developed. They have been reviewed and endorsed by the Accessibility Committee and are being reviewed by City of Penticton staff.

Emerging Opportunities

While the Plan provides an initial “to-do list” for actions that aim to remove and reduce barriers to accessibility, it is equally important to be adaptable and responsive to any emerging opportunities that improve accessibility. Throughout the year, various initiatives outside of the twenty (20) actions outlined in the plan were implemented, showing the City’s commitment to seizing unanticipated occasions to enhance the livability and accessibility of Penticton. These inter-departmental efforts demonstrate how staying open to new ideas, technologies, and feedback can complement the Accessibility Plan, ensuring that accessibility can evolve in real-time, following the needs and opportunities that arise in community.

HandyDART Expansion

On May 11, 2024, BC Transit and the City of Penticton expanded the HandyDART program. This included extended hours on Saturdays, the service now being available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, thanks to additional funding for the existing taxi supplement program and additional funding from the province and municipality. This has improved access for community members who rely on this service for their transportation needs.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals Program

The Accessible Pedestrian Signals Program was implemented as of March 1, 2024. These signals, installed in the downtown core and to be rolled out in phases to all signalized intersections throughout the city over the next few years, are designed to enhance safety for pedestrians with accessibility needs, as well as drivers and cyclists. Accessible Pedestrian Signals provide auditory, visual, and tactile information, ensuring that pedestrians are better informed when crossing the road. The advanced walk and bike signals provide an opportunity for those on foot or wheels to move forward across the road before vehicles get a green light. When the push button is held down, a voice message tells you the name of the street you are crossing and includes a ‘locator tone’ to assist pedestrians who are visually impaired in locating the push button.

AccessAbility Week 2024

During National AccessAbility Week 2024, the City showcased its commitment to accessibility through a variety of initiatives and community engagement. Highlights included free “Friends in Motion” classes and tours of the City’s Community Centre, including the pool and fitness facilities to promote inclusivity and safety in recreational spaces. They also included a spotlight on City initiatives, such as the Cart Exemption Program and the Accessible Pedestrian Signals Program. Community members were invited to provide feedback on accessibility barriers they were experiencing in City facilities and spaces and were encouraged to share programs or specialized equipment that could improve participation. The Social Development

Department, the Communications Department, the Recreation Department, and the Infrastructure Division worked closely together to share these initiatives with the community.

Mobi-Mats

In July 2024, the City of Penticton installed 150ft of Mobi-Mat, four (4) Mobi-decks and two (2) Mobi-chairs on Sudbury Beach at Shaka Lake. This equipment was donated to the City of Penticton through the Corona Accessing Paradise Pledge, an initiative launched by Corona and Mobi-Mat aiming to make Canadian beaches more accessible for people with mobility challenges. The City of Penticton was nominated by several community members and Penticton was selected due to its recognized demand for improved beach accessibility. These efforts have garnered praise from visitors and residents alike.

The Municipal Accessibility Network

The Municipal Accessibility Network was originally initiated by the City of Surrey to improve recreational accessibility across municipalities, but quickly transformed into a network which fosters collaboration between municipalities in British Columbia to share best practices, aims to improve provincial and municipal accessibility planning, and addressed emerging challenges that municipalities may encounter as they enact the changes coming with the Accessible British Columbia Act, which sets out accessibility standards for public sector organizations. The Network aims to take a collective impact approach, being organized by the City of Surrey, the City of Victoria, and the City of Penticton.

Accessibility Committee

The City of Penticton's Accessibility Committee has continued to play a vital role in driving the City's efforts to become more inclusive and accessible for community members and visitors. Their guiding principles: all-season accessibility, independence, and dignity, lived experience, user-centered approach, and meaningful engagement, along with the Province's guiding principles: inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design, have continued to guide the Committee in identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility for the City. The Committee is composed of diverse individuals, including people with disabilities and those working in the sector, who provide lived-experience perspectives and practical recommendations. Their focus includes reviewing the City's accessibility plans and providing guidance and feedback on new projects, ensuring they align with accessibility goals. With ongoing collaboration and consultation, the Committee has been instrumental in furthering the Council's strategic priority of creating a livable and accessible community.

Public Feedback Mechanism

The City of Penticton has continued to provide a public feedback mechanism to gather input from community members on accessibility issues and improvements, including improvements to the plan itself. The mechanism is available through a survey which can be found on the city's accessibility webpage, or physical copies are available at City Hall. Community members are invited to share their experiences, concerns, and suggestions regarding barriers they have encountered in public spaces, services, or city programs. The feedback collected helps the City and the Accessibility Committee better understand the

needs of the community and prioritize actions for accessibility improvements. It also allows staff to rectify barriers that can be done quickly. Since September 2024, eight (8) feedback forms have been completed and reviewed by the Accessibility Committee and appropriate city staff.

Final Thoughts

As we reflect on the progress made in the past year, the City of Penticton is on a committed path towards becoming more accessible and inclusive. While there is still much work to be completed, the progress made through collaboration and open communication have laid a strong foundation for continued improvements. The work completed so far demonstrates the shared dedication to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility and ensuring a livable and safe community for all. Moving forward, the City remains engaged in evolving its approach, learning from the community, and continuing to work towards becoming a truly accessible city.