

Special Accessibility Committee Meeting
to be held via Zoom and in person in Council Chambers – City Hall
Friday, September 18, 2026
at 10:00 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 August 28, 2026, Special Accessibility Committee Meeting
Recommendation:
THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the minutes of the August 28, 2026, Special meeting as presented.
4. **New Business**
 - Desrosiers 4.1 City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 20-23-2026 Final Progress Report
Staff Recommendation
THAT the Accessibility Committee endorse the report titled "City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 Final Progress Report".
5. **Adjournment**

Special Accessibility Committee Meeting

held via Zoom and in person in Room A

Friday, August 28, 2026

at 10:00 a.m.

Present:	Trisha Kaplan, Chair Leanne Williams, Vice-Chair Grant Pattingale Krista Russo Ron Crawford Kristi Bauman Randy Boras
Regrets:	Heather Miller Brian Patterson, Urban Systems
Council Liaison:	Mayor Julius Bloomfield
Staff:	Blake Laven, General Manager of Development Services Sarah Desrosiers, Social Development Specialist Ysabel Contreras, Parks Capital Projects Supervisor Janet Glowa, Legislative Assistant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Special Accessibility Committee to order at 10:01 a.m.

Mayor Bloomfield joined the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED**

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the agenda of August 28, 2026 as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Adoption of Minutes

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED**

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the minutes of the August 5, 2026 meeting as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. New Business

4.1 Final Draft KVR Trail Strategy and Implementation Plan

The Parks Capital Projects Supervisor presented on the Final Draft KVR Trail Strategy and Implementation Plan.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive into the record the report dated August 28, 2026 titled "Final Draft KVR Trail Strategy and Implementation Plan";

AND THAT the Accessibility Committee endorse the Final Draft KVR Trail Strategy and Implementation Plan for Council consideration.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mayor Bloomfield left the meeting at 10:39 a.m.

4.2 McGregor Park and McNicoll Park – Recommended Concepts

The Parks Capital Projects Supervisor presented on McGregor Park and McNicoll Park – Recommended Concepts.

Leanne Williams left the meeting at 10:59 a.m.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive into the record the report dated August 28, 2026 titled "McGregor Park and McNicoll Park – Recommended Concepts";

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

AND THAT the Accessibility Committee support the Proposed Concept for McGregor Park with an accessibility pathway added to the design and recommend that council direct staff to share the revised concept with the neighborhood and proceed with detailed design for construction;

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

AND THAT the Accessibility Committee support Concept 2 as the preferred layout concept for McNicoll Park and recommend that Council direct staff to share the recommended concept with the community and proceed with detailed design for construction.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4.3 James Ludvigson Commemorative Plaque

The Social Development Specialist presented on the James Ludvigson Plaque. The Committee reviewed wording options for the plaque and agreed by consensus on option 3.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive into the record the Memo to Committee dated August 28, 2026, titled "James Ludvigson Commemorative Plaque".

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **Adjournment**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adjourn the meeting held on August 28, 2026 at 11:22 a.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Certified Correct:

Janet Glowa
Legislative Assistant



penticton.ca

City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 Final Progress Report

PREPARED BY: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

DATE: SEPTEMBER 2026

Table of Contents

The Final Progress Report	2
1. Employment and Staff	3
1.1 Offer accessibility training to staff	3
1.2 Create an accessibility policy to protect and assist staff	3
1.3 Hire people with disabilities	4
2. Delivery of Services	5
2.1 Examine the City of Penticton website for accessibility and summarize findings	5
2.2 Advocate to BC Transit for accessible buses	6
2.3 Examine City services for accessibility alternatives and summarize findings	6
2.4 Create accessibility policies for City projects.....	7
2.5 Create an Accessible Independent Resident Policy	8
3. Built Environment	9
3.1 Examine bus stops for accessibility and summarize findings	9
3.2 Ensure accessibility features are piloted with people with disabilities	10
3.3 Examine City spaces for accessibility and summarize findings	10
3.4 Install accessible wayfinding in City buildings	11
3.5 Examine bike lane for accessibility and summarize findings.	12
4. Information and Communication	13
4.1 Examine progress reporting mechanisms both internally and externally	13
4.2 Offer live closed captioning during City meetings	14
4.3 Create an advisory list to consult for City projects for accessibility review	14
4.4 Geo-map accessibility barriers in Penticton	15
4.5 Create an accessible notification system for emergencies	15
4.6 Undertake a public education campaign about accessibility and disabilities	16
4.7 Meaningfully engage with residents with disabilities on a continuous basis	17
5. Emerging Opportunities.....	19
6. Public Feedback, Barriers and Community Impact	25
7. The Accessibility Committee	27
8. Next Steps	28

The Final Progress Report

The City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 was endorsed by Council on August 15, 2023, in accordance with the Accessible British Columbia Act. Since adoption, the City has worked to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility through improvements in employment practices, service delivery, the built environment, and information and communication systems. These efforts have been guided by the Accessibility Committee and supported through collaboration across municipal departments.

The plan was guided by the following vision statement:

The City of Penticton is committed to ensuring that residents of all abilities have equal and independent access to municipal services and aims to remove barriers to continually improve the accessibility of our community, ensuring that all residents and visitors experience the same quality of life throughout all seasons.

The Plan established twenty (20) actions designed to identify, remove and prevent barriers experienced by community members, visitors and staff. The actions were organized into four themes:

- Employment and Staff
- Delivery of Services
- Built Environment
- Information and Communication

Since implementation began, the City has completed or advanced the majority of the actions identified in the Plan while also pursuing several emerging opportunities that were not originally included but significantly improved accessibility within the community.

Approximately 90% of identified actions are either complete, advanced, or continuously underway. Key achievements include:

- Establishment of the Accessibility Advisory Process and review of 20 City projects
- Introduction of accessible emergency notifications through Penticton Alert
- Assessment and expansion of beach accessibility infrastructure through Mobi-Mats and Mobi-Chairs
- Enhanced accessibility of Council meetings through live and recorded captioning
- Formalization of free accessible parking

Completed	Continuous	In Progress	Exploratory	Emerging Opportunities
8	5	5	2	14

1. Employment and Staff

1.1 Offer accessibility training for staff

Education about disabilities, accessibility and adaptation, and barriers to accessibility.	In Progress
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Key Accomplishments

- Human Resources began development of a new employee learning platform.
- Staff established ongoing relationships with Accessible Employers, a provincial organization that supports employers in creating inclusive workplaces through training, resources, and best practices related to recruitment, retention, accommodation, and workplace accessibility.
- Staff participated in provincial engagement sessions related to Accessibility Employment Standards.
- Knowledge gained through implementation of the Accessibility Plan, collaboration with the Accessibility Committee, and review of municipal projects has increased staff understanding of accessibility barriers and inclusive practices.

Barriers Encountered

- Corporate learning platform development occurred simultaneously with training discussions.
- Limited staff capacity and competing operational priorities affected the City's ability to develop and deliver customized accessibility training during the plan period.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Develop and implement mandatory accessibility training for all employees and embed accessibility education into employee onboarding, leadership development, and ongoing professional learning programs.
- Establish training completion targets to measure participation.

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.	In Progress
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Key Accomplishments

- Development of the draft Discrimination and Racism Prevention Policy, which explicitly recognizes disability as a protected ground and reinforces the City's commitment to an inclusive and respectful workplace.
- Completion of a Disability Management Program Evaluation through the National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR), which assessed return-to-work practices, workplace accommodations, case management processes, and overall disability management systems.

Barriers Encountered

- Provincial Accessibility Employment Standards remained under development throughout much of the plan period, limiting the City's ability to align new policies with finalized provincial requirements.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Utilize findings from the NIDMAR Workplace Disability Management Assessment to strengthen accommodation, return-to-work, and disability management processes.
- Finalize the Discrimination and Racism Prevention Policy.
- Develop training to reinforce the Discrimination and Racism Prevention Policy.

1.3 Hire people with disabilities.

Include ensuring that hiring policies are effective for people with disabilities.	Continuous
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Key Accomplishments

- Establishment of a partnership with the Disability Management Institute (DMI) to administer non-occupational short-term disability claims for exempt employees and enhance support for all employee groups experiencing illness, injury, or disability.
- City staff actively monitored the development of Provincial Accessibility Employment Standards to better understand future employer obligations and emerging best practices related to inclusive recruitment and retention.

Barriers Encountered

- The City has limited workforce demographic data related to disability, making it difficult to establish baseline measures and evaluate recruitment outcomes for people with disabilities.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Explore opportunities to collect and monitor workforce diversity data in a manner that respects employee privacy and confidentiality.
- Review recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and retention practices through an accessibility and inclusion lens to identify and remove potential barriers for applicants and employees with disabilities.

2. Delivery of Services

2.1 Examine the City of Penticton Website for accessibility and summarize findings.

Complete an accessibility audit.	Continuous
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Key Accomplishments

- Accessibility improvements were introduced through the implementation of an accessibility assessment tool that evaluates web content in real time and provides guidance to staff on addressing accessibility concerns.
- Information Technology, Infrastructure, Communications, and Social Development staff collaborated to improve the accessibility of the City's Road Closures webpage, making road closure information compatible with screen readers and more accessible to community members with visual impairments. This enhancement was reviewed and validated by a member of the Accessibility Committee with lived experience, ensuring improvements were practical and user-focused.

Barriers Encountered

- Website accessibility is not a one-time project but an ongoing process requiring continuous monitoring, staff training, content updates, and technical improvements.
- Accessibility improvements often involve multiple departments and external vendors, requiring coordination and prioritization alongside other corporate technology projects.
- Limited staff capacity and available resources affected the City's ability to undertake a comprehensive website accessibility audit during the plan period

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Undertake a web review to establish a baseline understanding of accessibility strengths, gaps, and priorities.
- Continue integrating accessibility requirements into website development, content creation, and procurement practices.
- Provide training and resources for staff responsible for creating and maintaining web content to improve accessibility awareness and compliance.

2.2 Advocate to BC Transit for accessible buses.

Communicate the findings of accessibility engagements to BC Transit.	Completed
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Key Accomplishments

- Provided BC Transit with information regarding barriers and accessibility concerns identified through the development and implementation of the Accessibility Plan.
- During the implementation period, HandyDART service hours were expanded, including extended Saturday service through additional provincial and municipal funding, improving transportation options for community members who rely on accessible transit services.

Barriers Encountered

- The City does not own or operate conventional transit or HandyDART services and therefore has limited authority to directly implement service changes.
- Transit service improvements are dependent on BC Transit policies, funding availability, operational priorities, and regional planning processes.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Continue maintaining a collaborative relationship with BC Transit and regularly communicate accessibility-related feedback received from the community.

2.3 Examine City services for accessibility alternatives and summarize findings.

Complete an accessibility audit.	Continuous
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Key Accomplishments

- The Recreation Department expanded adaptive and inclusive recreation opportunities through the introduction and continuation of programs designed to increase participation and reduce barriers for residents of all abilities. These included free inclusive skate sessions, free walking track programming, adaptive hockey opportunities, sensory swims, and low-cost accessible recreation programming in areas such as music, art, and yoga.
- The Calls for Service Program was enhanced to include a dedicated accessibility category, providing community members and staff with a direct mechanism to report accessibility barriers and ensuring concerns are routed to the appropriate department for action.

Barriers Encountered

- A comprehensive corporate-wide accessibility audit of all City services was beyond available staff capacity and resources during the initial plan period.
- The absence of established service-level accessibility standards and performance measures made it challenging to consistently evaluate accessibility across all municipal services.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Continue integrating accessibility considerations into project planning, program development, public engagement, procurement, communications, and city services
- Establish performance measures and key indicators to monitor accessibility outcomes and improvements in municipal service delivery.

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.	Continuous
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Key Accomplishments

- Accessibility considerations have increasingly been integrated into the planning, design, and delivery of City services, projects, and programs across multiple departments, such as the Skaha Entrance Sign Project, the KVR Masterplan, the Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment, the Lakawanna Park Upgrade Plan, the Penticton

Pier Plan, Dog Park Upgrades, Eckhardt Corridor, Recreation Centre Signage, and E-Mobility Pilot Project.

- The City's Parks Signage Design Guidelines underwent an accessibility review through the Rick Hansen Foundation Access in Motion (AIM) program, resulting in accessibility-related improvements to readability, colour contrast, signage, typography, accessibility standards, and overall user experience.

Barriers Encountered

- While a formal accessibility policy for City projects was not adopted during the 2023-2026 plan period, accessibility has become increasingly embedded within municipal project planning and decision-making processes.
- Staff capacity to support accessibility reviews and implement recommendations varies across departments and project types.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Work with departments to develop a formal accessibility review process that requires City projects to be assessed against project-specific accessibility standards and considerations at key decision points throughout planning, design, and implementation.

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.	Exploratory
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Key Accomplishments

- Staff explored various policy models and approaches that could support independent access to municipal services for community members with disabilities.
- Council endorsed the Free Parking for People with Disabilities Policy, removing a financial barrier and improving independent access to public spaces, facilities, and services for individuals with valid disability parking placards.

Barriers Encountered

- The concept of an "Accessible Independent Resident Policy" is broad and intersects with many municipal functions, including transportation, communications, customer service, facilities, public spaces, emergency management, and digital services.

- Limited staff capacity and competing priorities resulted in a greater focus on implementing practical accessibility improvements and service enhancements rather than developing a comprehensive policy framework.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Reframe this action from the development of a single policy to the creation of an Accessible Services and Community Inclusion Framework that establishes principles and expectations for independent and dignified access across all City services.

3. Built Environment

3.1 Examine bus stops for accessibility and summarize findings

Complete an accessibility audit.	Complete
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Key Accomplishments

- City staff collaborated to begin examining bus stop accessibility throughout Penticton and establish a baseline inventory of existing transit amenities and accessibility features.
- The City maintains an inventory of bus stops and accessibility-related features, including shelters, benches, and sidewalk connections, allowing staff to monitor improvements over time. There are currently two hundred and fifty-seven (257) bus stops city-wide, fifty-one (51) of which have shelters, one hundred and thirty-nine (139) of which have benches and two hundred and thirty (230) of which are accessible by sidewalk. Two (2) more bus shelters are planned to be installed in 2027.

Barriers Encountered

- Upgrades to bus stop infrastructure are dependent on available capital funding, grant opportunities, operational budgets, and competing infrastructure priorities.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Continue expanding accessible features such as shelters, seating, sidewalk connections, curb ramps, lighting, and wayfinding elements.
- Integrate accessibility considerations into annual transportation planning, capital infrastructure programs, and asset management processes.

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.

In Progress

Key Accomplishments

- The Road Closures webpage accessibility improvements were evaluated by a member of the Accessibility Committee to verify compatibility with screen-reader technology and real-world usability.
- The Beach Accessibility Assessment project engaged people with disabilities and seniors directly in the evaluation of Penticton's beaches, helping to identify barriers, establish accessibility standards, and develop recommendations based on lived experience.
- The Accessibility Committee is made up of 50% of people with disabilities, and through the Accessibility Advisory Process, the Committee reviewed numerous municipal projects, plans, and initiatives, providing practical feedback on accessibility considerations and helping staff identify potential barriers prior to implementation.

Barriers Encountered

- Participation has largely occurred through the Accessibility Committee, which may not fully represent the diversity of disability experiences within the broader community.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Establish an honorarium or compensation policy that recognizes the expertise and time contributed by individuals with lived experience of disability.

3.3 Examine City spaces for accessibility and summarize findings.

Accessibility audit. This may include buildings, parks, beaches, roads, sidewalks, dog parks, etc.

Continuous

Key Accomplishments

- The City secured grant funding through BC Healthy Communities (\$18,000) to undertake a comprehensive accessibility assessment of Penticton's beaches with people with disabilities and seniors.

- Accessibility assessments were completed at Penticton's beaches, resulting in the identification of accessibility barriers, opportunities for improvement, and recommendations to support more inclusive recreational experiences.
- The City expanded beach accessibility infrastructure through the installation of Mobi-Mats, Mobi-Chairs, and accessible beach decking at multiple locations, improving independent access to waterfront recreation opportunities.
- The Rick Hansen Foundation Access in Motion (AIM) Review of the City's Parks and Recreation Design Guidelines resulted in several accessibility improvements and recommendations related to accessibility standards, signage, readability, colour contrast, typography, and user experience. (Emerging Opportunity)

Barriers Encountered

- The scope of this action is extensive and includes numerous City assets, facilities, parks, pathways, roads, sidewalks, beaches, and public spaces, making a comprehensive city-wide assessment challenging within a single planning cycle.
- Staff capacity, funding availability, and operational priorities limited the City's ability to undertake a full accessibility audit of all public spaces during the 2023-2026 plan period.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Continue implementing recommendations resulting from the Beach Accessibility Assessment and monitor the effectiveness of accessibility improvements over time.
- Prioritize assessments of high-use public spaces and facilities that have the greatest impact on community members and visitors with disabilities.
- Continue pursuing grants, partnerships, and funding opportunities to support accessibility assessments and implementation projects.

3.4 Install accessible wayfinding in City buildings.

This is the use of signage, colour and design elements to help occupants navigate a space.	In Progress
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Key Accomplishments

- Additional signage was installed at City Hall as part of the Bylaw Services relocation project, helping ensure residents could clearly locate and access Bylaw services.

- City staff collaborated to improve signage and navigation within municipal facilities, including the installation of appropriate signage for the Community Centre parking lot.

Barriers Encountered

- Staff capacity and competing capital and operational priorities limited the City's ability to undertake a comprehensive corporate-wide wayfinding program during the plan period.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Identify high-priority facilities and public-facing service locations and install wayfinding improvements based on public use, accessibility needs, and community feedback.

3.5 Examine bike lane for accessibility and summarize findings.

Complete an accessibility audit.	Completed
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Key Accomplishments

- The Accessibility Committee received a presentation from Infrastructure staff regarding bike lane design, implementation, and accessibility considerations, creating an opportunity for discussion and feedback from individuals with lived experience of disability.
- Staff reviewed the Province of British Columbia's Design Guide for Bus Stops Adjacent to Cycling Infrastructure, a resource developed by accessibility, transportation, and disability experts to help municipalities reduce conflicts between pedestrians, transit users, cyclists, and people with disabilities. The guide emphasizes universal accessibility, safe and comfortable travel for people of all abilities, and the importance of considering the needs of individuals with mobility, sensory, cognitive, and other disabilities during transportation planning.

Barriers Encountered

- Accessibility concerns related to bike lanes are often interconnected with other transportation infrastructure elements, including transit stops, sidewalks, crossings, curb ramps, and accessible parking spaces, making assessment more complex than evaluating bike lanes in isolation.

- Best practices for integrating cycling infrastructure with accessible pedestrian and transit infrastructure continue to evolve as municipalities gain experience and new research emerges.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Continue integrating accessibility considerations into active transportation and transportation planning initiatives rather than maintaining this as a standalone accessibility action.

4. Information and Communication

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.	Completed
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Key Accomplishments

- The City established annual progress reporting practices to communicate Accessibility Plan achievements, challenges, and next steps to Council, the Accessibility Committee, staff, and the community.
- Social Development staff provided presentations to the Penticton Leadership Team regarding the Accessibility Plan, Provincial Accessibility Standards, and the Accessibility Advisory Process, increasing awareness of accessibility obligations and initiatives across departments.

Barriers Encountered

- Public awareness of accessibility initiatives and reporting mechanisms remains variable, limiting opportunities for community participation and feedback.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Establish department-specific accessibility actions and reporting responsibilities to ensure accessibility is integrated across the organization. Departments should identify and report annually on accessibility initiatives, improvements, barriers, and outcomes relevant to their areas of responsibility, creating shared accountability for implementation of the Accessibility Plan.

4.2 Offer live closed captioning during City meetings.

Both online, on Zoom, and on the TVs in the Council Chambers.	Completed
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Key Accomplishments

- Closed captioning, which was previously only available through Zoom, was expanded through the implementation of a new meeting platform. Captioning is now available during live broadcasts and on recorded meetings, improving access to Council proceedings for a broader range of users.
- Legislative Services and Information Technology staff completed training on the new system to support successful implementation and ongoing operation of the platform.

Barriers Encountered

- Initial closed captioning functionality was limited to Zoom and was not available across all methods used to view Council meetings.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Explore additional accessibility features for public meetings, such as American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for select events, improved assistive listening technologies, and enhanced accessibility within Council Chambers.

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.	Completed
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Key Accomplishments

- The City developed and implemented the Accessibility Advisory Process (AAP), creating a formal mechanism for staff to seek accessibility feedback on projects, policies, programs, and initiatives by leveraging the expertise of the Accessibility Committee.
- Through the Accessibility Advisory Process, the Accessibility Committee reviewed twenty (20) projects, plans and initiatives, including:
 - City of Penticton Accessibility Plan 2023-2026

- Event Accessibility
- Accessible Pedestrian Signals Program
- Park Sign Standardization Project
- Sidewalk Construction Guide
- Lakawanna Park Upgrades
- EV Charging Stations
- Eckhardt Avenue Corridor Reconstruction
- Cooling Infrastructure
- Mobi-Mat Placements
- Accessible Features for the Local Government By-Election
- KVR Trail Strategy
- Penticton Pier Replacement
- Beach Accessibility Assessment Project
- Safe Public Places Bylaw No.2025-35
- McGregor Park and McNicoll Park Upgrades Engagement Plan
- The Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan
- Esplanade Renewal Plan
- Outdoor Rink Activation Planning
- National AccessAbility Week Funding 2027-2029 Program Concept

Barriers Encountered

- Project timelines and staff capacity occasionally limited opportunities to engage reviewers at the earliest stages of project development.
- As awareness of the Accessibility Advisory Process increased, demand for accessibility review support also increased, creating additional pressure on committee capacity and meetings.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Maintain and formalize the Accessibility Advisory Process as a standard component of project planning and decision-making across the organization.
- Develop a process for tracking how accessibility recommendations are incorporated into project outcomes and reporting on those results annually.
- Continue embedding lived-experience perspectives into project planning, community engagement, infrastructure design, communications and policy development activities.

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.

Exploratory

Key Accomplishments

- The City introduced a dedicated Accessibility category within the Calls for Service Program, allowing community members and staff to report accessibility barriers directly to the appropriate department for action. While not a mapping tool, this mechanism provides a systematic process for identifying and responding to accessibility concerns throughout the community.

Barriers Encountered

- Accessibility conditions can change over time due to construction, seasonal conditions, infrastructure improvements, maintenance activities, and temporary barriers, making data accuracy challenging to maintain.
- The scope of potential mapping information is broad and could include public buildings, parks, sidewalks, trails, transportation infrastructure, parking, beaches, and private-sector locations.
- Determining how accessibility information should be verified, updated, and maintained would require clear operational processes and dedicated resources.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Evaluate whether the Accessibility category within the Calls for Service Program can be enhanced with mapping or geographic reporting functionality to identify barrier trends and priority areas.

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.

Completed

Key Accomplishments

- The City successfully implemented Penticton Alert as its official emergency notification system in May 2025, fulfilling the intent of this action.
- Accessible features of Penticton Alert include:
 - Multiple notification methods, including:
 - Mobile application notifications
 - SMS/text messages
 - Email notifications
 - Automated phone calls
 - Screen reader compatibility for individuals who are blind or have low vision.
 - Location-based notifications that allow community members to receive alerts specific to areas relevant to them.
 - The ability to register multiple locations, such as a residence, workplace, family member's home, or vacation property.
 - Alerts that can include maps, visual information, and hyperlinks to additional resources.
 - Notifications that can be received without requiring community members to actively monitor social media or City websites.

Barriers Encountered

- Prior to implementation of Penticton Alert, emergency notifications relied on a variety of communication channels that did not provide the same level of accessibility, flexibility, or reach.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Undertake targeted outreach and education to increase enrollment in Penticton Alert, including providing sign-up assistance at community events, City facilities, and through community organizations that support seniors, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations.
- Incorporate accessibility considerations into all future emergency management planning, communication strategies, and technology procurements.

4.6 Undertake a public education campaign about accessibility and disabilities.

Meant to remove biases and attitudinal barriers within the community.	In Progress
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Key Accomplishments

- Social Development, Communications, Recreation, and Infrastructure staff collaborated on accessibility-focused awareness initiatives and community engagement activities during National AccessAbility Week in 2024, 2025, and 2026, helping raise awareness about accessibility, inclusion, and the experiences of people with disabilities.
- The Recreation Department hosted accessible programming, facility tours, and demonstrations that highlighted adaptive equipment, inclusive recreation opportunities, and accessibility improvements within City facilities.
- Family Day celebrations included sensory-friendly spaces for three consecutive years, helping increase awareness of neurodiversity and creating more inclusive opportunities for residents and families to participate in community events.
- Accessibility-related information was shared through community events, public engagement activities, Council Open Houses, Farmers' Market outreach, community surveys, and City communications channels.

Barriers Encountered

- Limited staff capacity and communications resources affected the ability to undertake public awareness initiatives.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2023

- Develop a multi-year accessibility awareness strategy that extends beyond AccessAbility Week and promotes accessibility year-round.

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.

Completed

Key Accomplishments

- The City maintained a public accessibility feedback mechanism in accordance with the Accessible British Columbia Act, allowing community member to provide feedback online or through physical forms available at City Hall.

- Accessibility was included as a topic in the 2025 Community Accessibility Survey, providing valuable information on barriers, improvements, and community priorities.
- The Accessibility Committee provided an ongoing mechanism for people with lived experience to contribute directly to municipal decision-making and accessibility planning.
- Community members participated in the Beach Accessibility Assessment, helping identify barriers, develop accessibility standards, and evaluate opportunities for improvement within public spaces.

Barriers Encountered

- Community members with accessibility needs are not a single group and ensuring representation across a broad range of lived experiences, disability types, ages, and backgrounds remains an ongoing challenge.
- While multiple engagement opportunities exist, awareness of those opportunities may not be universal across the community.
- Staff capacity and resources can affect the frequency and scale of accessibility-focused engagement activities.

Recommendation for 2027 – 2030

- Expand engagement opportunities by building relationships with disability-serving organizations, community groups, seniors' organizations, and underrepresented populations.

Emerging Opportunities

While the Accessibility Plan identified twenty (20) actions to guide the City's work from 2023 to 2026, accessibility is an evolving field that requires communities to remain responsive to emerging needs, opportunities, partnerships, and innovations. Throughout the implementation period, the City pursued a number of initiatives that were not specifically identified within the original Accessibility Plan but significantly advanced accessibility, inclusion, and equitable participation for community members and visitors with disabilities.

These opportunities emerged through community feedback, interdepartmental collaboration, provincial and national partnerships, grant funding opportunities, Accessibility Committee input, and organizational innovation. In many cases, these initiatives accelerated progress toward the goals of the Accessibility Plan and produced accessibility improvements that may not have otherwise occurred within the original action framework.

The following initiatives demonstrate the City's commitment to embedding accessibility across all areas of municipal operations and to capitalizing on opportunities that support a more inclusive, livable, and accessible community.

Disability Management Program Evaluation (NIDMAR)

In 2025, the City successfully applied to participate in a Workplace Disability Management Assessment (WDMA) through the National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR). The assessment provided an independent review of the City's disability management program, including policies, procedures, workplace accommodations, return-to-work practices, employee supports, and overall organizational capacity to respond to disability-related needs.

The assessment identified several strengths within the City's existing approach, including wellness initiatives, safety programs, early intervention practices, and workplace accommodation efforts. It also identified opportunities to further strengthen policies, communication practices, education, and program evaluation. The findings provide valuable insight and a roadmap for continuous improvement as the City works to enhance supports for employees experiencing illness, injury, or disability.

While not originally included as an action within the Accessibility Plan, this initiative directly supported the Plan's objectives related to creating an inclusive workplace and removing barriers for employees with disabilities.

Supports Actions: 1.2 Create an Accessibility Policy to Protect and Assist Staff; 1.3 Hire People with Disabilities.

Partnership with Disability Management Institute (DMI)

The City established a partnership with the Disability Management Institute (DMI) to administer non-occupational short-term disability claims for exempt employees. Additionally, this partnership enhances the City's ability to support all employee groups experiencing illness, injury, or disability through more specialized disability management services and case coordination.

The initiative strengthens internal capacity to support workplace accommodations, recovery, return-to-work planning, and employee well-being. Although not identified in the original Accessibility Plan, the partnership contributed to the broader goal of creating a more accessible and supportive workplace environment.

Supports Actions: 1.2 Create an Accessibility Policy to Protect and Assist Staff; 1.3 Hire People with Disabilities.

Free Parking for People with Disabilities

In 2025, Council formally adopted the Free Parking for People with Disabilities Policy, providing free parking in designated accessible parking spaces and City-controlled paid parking areas for individuals displaying valid disability parking placards and eligible organizations transporting people with disabilities.

The policy removed a financial barrier for community members and visitors with disabilities and acknowledged the additional costs often associated with living with a disability. The initiative promoted independence, dignity, and equitable access to City facilities, programs, and services.

Supports Actions: 2.3 Examine City Services for Accessibility Alternatives; 2.5 Create an Accessible Independent Resident Policy.

HandyDART Expansion

In partnership with BC Transit, HandyDART service hours were expanded during the implementation period, including extended Saturday service hours. Additional provincial and municipal funding supported these enhancements, improving transportation access for community members who rely on accessible transit services.

Transportation is one of the most frequently cited accessibility needs within communities. The expansion of HandyDART improved access to employment, healthcare, recreation, shopping, and community participation for individuals with disabilities and mobility challenges.

Supports Actions: 2.3 Examine City Services for Accessibility Alternatives; 2.5 Create an Accessible Independent Resident Policy.

Road Closures Webpage Update

A collaborative project involving Information Technology, Infrastructure, Parks, and Social Development staff resulted in significant improvements to the City's Road Closures webpage. Previously, road closure information relied heavily on visual mapping that was not fully accessible to community members using screen-reader technology.

The updated webpage provides road closure information in a format that is compatible with screen readers and was tested by a member of the Accessibility Committee with lived experience of disability. This project demonstrated how relatively small changes can significantly improve access to public information.

Supports Actions: 2.1 Website Accessibility; 2.3 Examine City Services for Accessibility Alternatives.

Calls for Service Program

The City introduced a dedicated Accessibility category within its Calls for Service Program, creating a streamlined process for community members and staff to report accessibility barriers throughout the community. Reports are automatically directed to the relevant department for review and action.

The enhancement improved the City's ability to identify accessibility barriers, respond to concerns more efficiently, and track recurring issues. It also provided an additional mechanism for community members to participate in accessibility improvements on an ongoing basis.

Supports Actions: 2.3 Examine City Services for Accessibility Alternatives; 4.1 Examine Progress Reporting Mechanisms.

Mobi-Mats and Beach Accessibility Expansion

The City significantly expanded beach accessibility infrastructure during the implementation period of the Accessibility Plan. Initial installations at Sudbury Beach included Mobi-Mats, accessible beach decking, and Mobi-Chairs, with additional accessibility improvements later expanded to other waterfront locations. As of Summer 2026, accessible beach access features have been installed at Marina Way Park, Okanagan Park Dog Beach, Okanagan Beach, Skaha Beach, and Sudbury Beach. These improvements include a combination of concrete beach access ramps, Mobi-Mats, and water access points designed to improve independent access to Penticton's beaches and waterfront amenities for people with disabilities and mobility challenges.

These improvements increased independent access to Penticton's waterfronts for individuals with mobility limitations and received positive feedback from community members and visitors.

Supports Actions: 3.2 Ensure Accessibility Features are Piloted with People with Disabilities; 3.3 Examine City Spaces for Accessibility.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals Program

The Accessible Pedestrian Signals Program introduced auditory, visual, and tactile crossing information at signalized intersections. The program improves crossing safety for people who are blind, have low vision, or benefit from additional crossing cues.

The implementation represented a significant accessibility improvement to the City's transportation network and established a foundation for future expansion throughout the community.

Supports Actions: 3.3 Examine City Spaces for Accessibility; 3.5 Examine Bike Lanes for Accessibility.

Rick Hansen Access in Motion Parks Signage Design Guidelines Accessibility Review

The City's Parks Signage Design Guidelines underwent an independent accessibility review through the Rick Hansen Foundation's Access in Motion (AIM) Program. The review evaluated the accessibility of design standards and provided recommendations for improvement.

Several recommendations were incorporated into the final guidelines, including improvements related to colour contrast, readability, typography, sign placement, accessibility standards, and overall user experience. The review strengthened the City's capacity to incorporate accessibility into future park and recreation projects.

Supports Actions: 2.3 Examine City Services for Accessibility Alternatives; 2.4 Accessibility in City Projects; 3.4 Accessible Wayfinding.

AccessAbility Week (2024, 2025 and 2026)

The City participated in National AccessAbility Week annually throughout the implementation period. Activities included community events, facility tours, public education initiatives, accessibility awareness campaigns, adaptive program demonstrations, and opportunities for public feedback.

AccessAbility Week became an important platform for celebrating accessibility achievements, raising awareness of disability issues, and promoting municipal accessibility initiatives across departments.

Supports Actions: 4.6 Public Education Campaign; 4.7 Meaningful Engagement of Residents with Disabilities.

Inclusive Recreation Initiatives

Throughout the implementation period of the Accessibility Plan, the Recreation Department expanded inclusive recreation opportunities for residents of all abilities. Recreation staff purchased adaptive sport and recreation equipment, including skate aids and adaptive fitness equipment, and continued to offer inclusive and accessible recreation programming.

Programs included free inclusive skate sessions, free walking track programming, adaptive hockey opportunities, sensory swims, and low-cost accessible music, art, and yoga programs. Family Day celebrations also featured sensory-friendly spaces for three consecutive years, creating more inclusive opportunities for community participation.

These initiatives helped reduce barriers to recreation, increase participation opportunities, and support a more inclusive recreation system for residents of all abilities.

Supports Actions: 2.3 Examine City Services for Accessibility Alternatives; 4.6 Undertake a Public Education Campaign About Accessibility and Disabilities; 4.7 Meaningfully Engage with Residents with Disabilities on a Continuous Basis.

Municipal Accessibility Network

The City actively participated in the Municipal Accessibility Network, a provincial collaboration involving municipalities working to improve accessibility planning and implementation practices. The network facilitated knowledge-sharing, peer learning, and collaboration on accessibility initiatives across British Columbia.

Participation enabled staff to learn from emerging practices, monitor evolving accessibility standards, and contribute to broader discussions on accessibility within local government.

Supports Actions: All Accessibility Plan Actions.

2025 Community Survey

The City conducted a community accessibility survey to better understand barriers experienced by residents and perceptions of accessibility improvements within Penticton. The survey found that 21.5% of respondents or their family members identified as having accessibility needs. Approximately 44.9% believed accessibility had improved since implementation of the Accessibility Plan.

Survey respondents identified Mobi-Mats, accessible beach infrastructure, ramps, curb improvements, and mobility enhancements as key improvements. Respondents also identified ongoing concerns related to sidewalks, parking, active transportation infrastructure, winter maintenance, and inclusive design considerations.

The survey provided valuable information that informed evaluation of the Accessibility Plan and will help guide development of the 2027-2030 Accessibility Plan.

Supports Actions: 2.3 Examine City Services for Accessibility; 3.3 Examine City Spaces for Accessibility, and 4.7 Meaningful Engagement of Residents with Disabilities.

Global Leadership Exchange

Through participation in accessibility-focused provincial and intergovernmental networks, conferences, presentations, and collaborative learning opportunities, City staff were able to share Penticton's accessibility initiatives while learning from accessibility leaders across British Columbia and beyond.

These exchanges supported continuous improvement by exposing staff to innovative approaches, emerging standards, successful municipal practices, and lived-experience

perspectives that informed the City's accessibility work throughout the implementation period.

Supports Actions: All Accessibility Plan Actions.

Public Feedback, Barriers & Community Impact

The Accessible British Columbia Act requires prescribed organizations to establish a public feedback mechanism that allows individuals to identify accessibility barriers and provide recommendations related to accessibility planning. Throughout the implementation of the Accessibility Plan, the City maintained a public accessibility feedback mechanism through its website and by providing physical copies at City Hall. Residents were invited to share their experiences, identify barriers, and suggest opportunities to improve accessibility within City facilities, programs, services, and public spaces.

Between 2023 and 2026, the feedback mechanism generated valuable insight into the accessibility experiences of residents with a variety of disabilities and accessibility needs. Feedback was reviewed by the Accessibility Committee and shared with appropriate City departments to support barrier removal and continuous improvement.

Several common themes emerged through the feedback received:

Beach and Waterfront Accessibility

The most frequently identified barrier related to accessing Penticton's beaches and waterfront. Multiple residents identified challenges accessing the water using mobility devices and requested accessible pathways, ramps, mobility mats, beach wheelchairs, and improved water entry points. Feedback received through the mechanism directly supported future work related to beach accessibility assessments, Mobi-Mat installations, and Mobi-Chair expansion.

Accessibility of Buildings and Facilities

Residents identified accessibility barriers within public buildings and facilities, including heavy doors, inaccessible washrooms, lack of automatic door operators, inadequate seating, accessibility concerns at the Library and Museum, City Hall facilities, SOEC, and recreation facilities. Community members also identified opportunities to improve accessible wayfinding, signage, elevators, and facility navigation.

Transportation and Mobility

Feedback highlighted accessibility concerns related to bus stops, transit services, HandyDART eligibility processes, bike lane design, sidewalk accessibility, curb ramps, accessible parking, and pedestrian crossings. Residents emphasized the importance of accessible transportation options for maintaining independence and participating in community life.

Public Spaces and Infrastructure

Residents reported barriers associated with sidewalks, crosswalks, park infrastructure, accessibility of public washrooms, beach amenities, dog parks, and snow and ice management. Many respondents emphasized the importance of applying universal design principles during infrastructure planning and renewal projects.

Information and Communication

Several submissions identified challenges accessing information, including website navigation, website accessibility, public signage, transit information, and communication regarding City services and events. Accessibility of digital information and compatibility with screen-reader technology were recurring themes.

Policy and Practice

Residents also provided feedback regarding accessible parking, event accessibility, customer service, community inclusion, service delivery practices, and the need for accessibility considerations to be integrated into City decision-making and project planning processes.

Impact of Feedback

Feedback received through the public mechanism helped inform several accessibility initiatives undertaken during the implementation period, including:

- Beach Accessibility Assessments and Mobi-Mat expansions.
- Free Parking for People with Disabilities.
- Improvements to the Road Closures webpage.
- Accessibility reviews through the Accessibility Advisory Process.
- Enhancements to the City's Calls for Service Program.
- Community accessibility surveys and engagement activities.
- Ongoing discussions regarding accessible wayfinding, building access, transportation, and service delivery.

The public feedback mechanism has proven to be an important tool for identifying barriers, validating community priorities, and ensuring that lived experiences continue to inform accessibility improvements throughout the City. As the City moves into the next Accessibility Plan, maintaining and strengthening opportunities for residents to share accessibility-related

feedback will remain a key component of creating a more accessible, inclusive, and equitable community.

The Accessibility Committee

The City of Penticton Accessibility Committee was established as a Council Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. The Committee's role was to make recommendations to Council, support implementation of the City's Accessibility Plan, identify accessibility and inclusion barriers, and advise on opportunities to remove and prevent barriers experienced by residents when interacting with the City. The Committee also played a key role in fostering awareness of accessibility issues and helping ensure that lived experience informed municipal decision-making.

The Committee consisted of nine volunteer voting members appointed by Council and was intentionally structured to reflect the diversity of people with disabilities and individuals working within the accessibility sector. During the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan period, the Committee was chaired by Trisha Kaplan, with Leanne Williams serving as Vice-Chair. Committee members included Krista Bauma, Randy Boras, James Ludvigson, Heather Miller, Grant Pattingale, Krista Russo, and Ron Crawford. Council representation was provided by Councilor Ryan Graham, with Councilor James Miller Boulton and Mayor Julius Bloomfield serving as Council representatives and alternates throughout the life of the Committee.

Early in its work, the Committee established a set of guiding principles that shaped its approach to accessibility planning and decision-making. These principles included:

- all-season accessibility;
- independence and dignity;
- safety and security;
- lived experience;
- a user-centered approach; and
- meaningful engagement.

Together with the Province's accessibility principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design, these principles became an important foundation for the City's accessibility work and helped guide discussions, recommendations, and project reviews throughout the implementation of the Plan.

The Committee's contributions extended far beyond the quarterly meetings, with a total of eighteen (18) meetings having occurred. Members consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to improving accessibility in Penticton by contributing their time, expertise,

lived experience, and professional knowledge. Through thoughtful discussions and constructive feedback, the Committee helped staff better understand barriers experienced by residents with disabilities and encouraged the City to consider accessibility earlier and more consistently in municipal planning, design, communications, and service delivery.

One of the Committee's most significant accomplishments was helping establish a culture of accessibility within the organization. In addition to providing recommendations on Accessibility Plan actions, members reviewed municipal projects, provided input on public feedback received by the City, identified emerging accessibility priorities, assisted in evaluating accessibility initiatives, and contributed ideas that led to several of the opportunities and improvements highlighted throughout this report. Their willingness to share personal experiences and advocate for inclusive solutions helped ensure that accessibility considerations remained grounded in the real-world experiences of residents and visitors.

As the City prepares for its next Accessibility Plan, the Accessibility Committee's work has established a strong foundation for future progress. The Committee's passion, dedication, and collaborative approach helped transform accessibility from a legislative requirement into an ongoing organizational commitment, advancing Council's vision of a more livable, inclusive, and accessible community for all.

Next Steps

The completion of the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan represents an important milestone in the City of Penticton's accessibility journey, but it does not mark the end of the City's commitment to accessibility. Accessibility is an ongoing process of identifying, removing, and preventing barriers, and many of the initiatives undertaken during this plan period have established a strong foundation for future work. Through collaboration with the Accessibility Committee, residents, community organizations, and City departments, accessibility has become increasingly integrated into municipal planning, project delivery, service provision, and decision-making.

Development of the next plan will continue to be guided by the principle that community members with lived experience of disability are experts in identifying barriers and solutions. The City will work collaboratively with community members, disability-serving organizations, Indigenous partners, businesses, and other stakeholders to ensure the new plan reflects a broad range of experiences and perspectives. Meaningful engagement will remain a cornerstone of accessibility planning and will help ensure that future actions are responsive to community needs and priorities.

The next Accessibility Plan will also focus on strengthening accountability and implementation. Building on lessons learned from the 2023-2026 plan period, future actions will seek to further integrate accessibility into departmental work plans, project development processes, service delivery, communications, infrastructure planning, and organizational decision-making. This approach will help ensure that accessibility remains a shared responsibility across the organization and continues to be considered in both day-to-day operations and long-term planning.

While significant progress has been made, accessibility needs and expectations will continue to evolve. The City remains committed to continuous improvement and to creating a community where residents and visitors of all abilities can participate fully, independently, and with dignity. Through ongoing collaboration, innovation, and investment, the City of Penticton will continue working toward its vision of ensuring that all residents and visitors experience the same quality of life throughout all seasons