

## **Working Towards a Liveable and Accessible Community**

**(Penticton, BC – July 14, 2023)** – In September 2022, the Provincial Government introduced new legislation mandating municipalities to have an Accessibility Plan that outlines how to achieve barrier-free public access to all municipal services and facilities.

City Council has appointed nine people to form a Taskforce to develop the Accessibility Plan that identifies access challenges and proposes actions to remove and prevent barriers to the City's services and facilities by September 1, 2023. This Taskforce is made up of community members with diverse backgrounds, who share a desire to serve their community and have knowledge, interest and/or direct experience managing access challenges.

The Taskforce has identified a number of specific barriers with suggested actions and a draft list of priorities has been proposed for further discussion. "The work of the Taskforce is a vital step toward making our community more liveable and accessible," says Mayor Julius Bloomfield. "Our goal to be inclusive and proactive can only occur when we identify and address the barriers that impede people's ease of access to our services and facilities. The Accessibility Plan is an important first step."

A requirement of the Accessibility Plan is to implement and maintain a mechanism to accommodate public feedback regarding accessibility matters. The community is invited to comment on the barriers they've experienced while using City facilities or services by completing a feedback form available at [penticton.ca/accessiblecity](https://penticton.ca/accessiblecity). Also on this webpage is information about actions the City has already taken to support barrier-free access to facilities and amenities and further information about the Taskforce. "Hearing from the community will help us to identify and remove barriers that people experience while trying to use City services and facilities," says Jamie Lloyd-Smith, the City's Social Development Specialist. "We encourage you to visit the *Accessible City* webpage to learn more about accessibility at the City of Penticton."

According to the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, a barrier is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Some of these barriers can include the physical environment, architectural or structural builds, attitudes and beliefs, practices and policies, information, communication, technology and intersecting forms of discrimination.

The Draft Accessibility Plan will be presented to Council on August 15.

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