TOWN OF LADYSMITH

Celebrate our Present. Embrace our Future. Honour our Past.

AGENDA
Accessibility Committee
Wednesday, September 25, 2024 at 7:00pm
Frank Jameson Community Centre Lower Program Room, 810 6th Avenue

<u>Mandate:</u> *The primary function of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to identify barriers to inclusion and accessibility, and to make recommendations to Council as to how to remove and prevent these barriers.*

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (7:00pm)**
   The Town of Ladysmith acknowledges with gratitude that this meeting takes place on the unceded territory of the Stz'uminus First Nation.

2. **AGENDA APPROVAL**

3. **MINUTES APPROVAL**
   Minutes of the meeting held May 22, 2024 (attached) for approval.

4. **LINK TO UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES**
   Diane Hobelaid, Chair, has provided a link to Universal Design Principles from the Centre for Excellence for the Town's use in future planning and projects:
   [The 7 Principles - Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#)

5. **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN FRAMEWORK FOR REVIEW**
   Based on the Committee's feeback from the May 22, 2024 meeting, a draft framework for the Accessiblity Plan is presented for review and discussion.

6. **MANAGER OF FACILITY OPERATIONS**
   Richard Frost, Manager of Facility Operations, will provide a brief update of accessibility projects completed to date.

7. **GRANT OPPORTUNITY**
   Councillor Jacobson has brought forward an accessibility grant opportunity from Sparc BC. Staff are seeking recommendations for projects.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

MINUTES OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024
LOWER PROGRAM ROOM, FJCC

MEMBERS PRESENT

Diane Hobelaid, Chair
Councillor Amanda Jacobson
Joel Helland

Andy Hobelaid
Shaun McKenzie
Christina Stephen

REGRETS

Jordan Herbison

STAFF PRESENT

Sue Bouma
Richard Frost

CALL TO ORDER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	Ms. Hobelaid, Chair, called the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., recognizing with gratitude that it was taking place on the unceded territory of the Stz'uminus First Nation.
AGENDA APPROVAL	*Moved and seconded:* That the agenda for the May 22, 2024 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee be approved as presented. *Motion carried.*
MINUTES APPROVAL	*Moved and seconded:* That the minutes of the April 3, 2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved. *Motion carried.*
ACCESSIBILITY PLAN DISCUSSION	The Committee discussed preferred aspects of the accessibility plans from the City of Duncan, the City of Parksville, and the Municipality of North Cowichan. They underscored the importance of using the accessibility plan to move from a "back door approach" of offering accommodation, to an explicit and welcoming approach, where Universal Design is considered in the design or renovation of Town-owned public spaces. Staff advised that they would bring a draft compilation of the recommendations to the next meeting for the committee's review.

Q & A ACCESSIBILITY FOR DEAF INDIVIDUALS WORKSHOP FOR MUNICIPAL SPORT AND RECREATION PROVIDERS

Richard Frost, Manager of Facility Operations, summarized the information received in the Accessibility for Deaf Individuals for Municipal Sport and Recreation Providers workshop.

LIST OF POTENTIAL ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS

The Committee listed potential accessibility projects, with priorities for public safety, such as level egress and emergency exits, as well as the following:

- Upgrading the fire alarm system to include visual alarms
- Installing power operating mechanism for washroom doors and doors that provide access to the pool and fitness area
- Installing grab bars in all accessible washroom stalls
- Installing fold-down shower seats in the changeroom
- Hi-vis and (where possible) tactile to indicate locations (Transfer Beach)
- Universal design washroom (Transfer Beach)
- Improve pathways to various amenities (e.g., Kinsmen Shelter, Food Truck area)
- Vertical accessible parking signage in the main parking lot.

Chair Diane Hobelaid advised that she would bring Universal Design principles to the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

By unanimous consent the Committee agreed to break for the summer and meet again at the Frank Jameson Community Centre lower program room in September 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved and seconded:
That this Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting be adjourned at 8:18-pm.
Motion carried

RECEIVED:

_____
Diane Hobelaid
Chair

_____
Sue Bouma
Corporate Officer

Ladysmith Accessibility Plan

A. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Introduction

The Town of Ladysmith is committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment for all residents and visitors. This plan outlines our strategy to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility, ensuring that everyone can fully participate in community life.

This Accessibility Plan is a living document that will evolve as we continue to engage with the community and address new challenges.

Arial fourteen font has been used in this document to improve Accessibility. The accessibility of this document has been verified using the Adobe Pro accessibility checker and the WebAim colour contrast checker.

Vision and Goals

Our vision is to create an inclusive community where all individuals, regardless of ability, have equal access to services, facilities, and opportunities. The goals of this plan are to:

1. Identify and remove barriers to accessibility.
2. Promote inclusive design in all new developments and renovations.
3. Enhance public awareness and understanding of accessibility issues.
4. Ensure continuous improvement and community engagement in accessibility initiatives.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

In 2023 an Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) was established, consisting of residents with diverse experiences and knowledge of disability issues. The AAC has provided guidance and feedback on the development and implementation of the Accessibility Plan and will continue to work with the Town to help create a more accessible and inclusive Ladysmith.

Definitions

(North Cowichan)

- **Accessibility**
Accessibility involves removing the barriers faced by individuals. These can include, but are not limited to, physical, sensory, cognitive, learning and mental health, and the various barriers, including attitudinal and systemic, that impede an individual's ability to participate in social, cultural, political, and economic life. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent. As we age, our abilities change and therefore an accessible society is one designed to include everybody, at all stages of life.

- **Equity**
Refers to both the fair and just distribution of benefits and burdens to all affected parties and communities (distributional equity) along with the fair and inclusive access to decision-making processes that impact community outcomes (process equity). In practice, taking an equitable approach means understanding and deliberately addressing current and historic underrepresentation and disadvantages.

- **Inclusion**
Acknowledging and valuing people's differences to enrich social planning, decision-making, and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive municipality, we each have a sense of belonging and acceptance, and are recognized as valued and contributing citizens. Real inclusion takes place when those already included learn from those who are excluded and initiate change.

- **Intersectionality**
The intersection, or crossover, of our many identities affects how each of us experience the region and its communities. These intersections occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power (e.g., laws, policies, senior governments, other political and economic unions, religious institutions, media).

- **Privilege**
  The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities afforded to members of a dominant group in a society or in each context.

- **Systemic Barriers**
  Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation in, and the benefits of, social, economic and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but are built into the way society operates. Existing policies, practices, and procedures, as well as assumptions and stereotypes may reinforce these barriers.

(Jordan Herbison – Inclusion/Exclusion Continuum)
- **Exclusion**
  "Shutting out" others in one form or another.

- **Inclusion**
  "all-embracing"

- **Inclusion reality**
  The actual current state and effectiveness of inclusion practices.

- **Diversity**
  Understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences; **True diversity** is the inclusion and representation of individuals from a variety of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences in a given environment. It ensures all individuals are respected and empowered to participate equally, and their unique contributions are valued by everyone.

- **Assimilation**
  To take in and incorporate as one's own; absorb.

- **Integration**
  A process of placing people with differences together that were formerly separated.

- **Segregation**
  A system that keeps different groups separate from each other, either through physical dividers or the use of social pressures/laws/regulations.

B. FRAMEWORK OF THE PLAN

Key Areas of Focus

1. Public Buildings and Spaces

- **Audits and Upgrades**: Conduct accessibility audits of all public buildings and spaces. Implement necessary modifications to ensure compliance with accessibility standards, including ramps, automatic doors, accessible washrooms, and signage (Duncan Engagement Site) (northcowichan) (northcowichan).
- **Inclusive Design**: Ensure new buildings and spaces are designed with accessibility in mind from the outset (Duncan Engagement Site) (northcowichan).

2. Transportation

- **Accessible Transit**: Ensure that public transit is fully accessible. This includes having low-floor buses, accessible bus stops and shelters, and providing training for transit staff on assisting passengers with disabilities (Duncan Engagement Site) (northcowichan).
- **Active Transportation**: Develop and maintain accessible pedestrian pathways, crosswalks, and cycling routes (northcowichan).

3. Parks and Recreation

- **Inclusive Facilities**: Improve the accessibility of parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities. Ensure pathways are wide and smooth, provide accessible seating and picnic areas, and install adaptive playground equipment (Duncan Engagement Site) (northcowichan).
- **Program Accessibility**: Offer adaptive sports and recreation programs to cater to individuals with different abilities (northcowichan) .

4. Information and Communication

- **Accessible Formats**: Make all public information available in accessible formats, such as braille, large print, and digital formats compatible with screen readers (northcowichan) (northcowichan).

- **Website Accessibility**: Ensure the community website follows best practices for digital accessibility, providing clear and accessible information online ([BC Accessibility HUB](#)) ([northcowichan](#)).
- **Communication Support**: Provide sign language interpreters and other communication supports for public meetings and events ([Duncan Engagement Site](#)) ([northcowichan](#)).

5. Employment

- **Inclusive Hiring Practices**: Promote inclusive hiring practices and ensure that job opportunities are accessible to all applicants ([northcowichan](#)) ([northcowichan](#)).
- **Workplace Accommodations**: Provide necessary accommodations for employees with disabilities and offer training for staff on disability awareness and inclusion ([northcowichan](#)) ([northcowichan](#)).

C. GUIDANCE

Community Engagement and Feedback

- **Public Consultations**: Conduct regular public consultations to gather input from residents on accessibility issues and areas for improvement (BC Accessibility HUB) (northcowichan).
- **Feedback Mechanism**: Establish an online platform for residents to provide feedback and report accessibility issues. This platform will include a map tool to identify specific locations needing accessibility upgrades (Duncan Engagement Site) (northcowichan).

D. ACTION

Implementation and Monitoring

- **Timeline**: The Accessibility Plan will be implemented over a three-year period, with specific milestones and targets set for each year ([Duncan Engagement Site](#)) ([northcowichan](#)).
- **Annual Review**: The AAC will review progress annually and provide a report to Town Council. Adjustments to the plan will be made based on feedback and new accessibility standards ([BC Accessibility HUB](#)) ([northcowichan](#)).
- **Continuous Improvement**: Regularly update the plan to incorporate new best practices and address emerging accessibility issues ([northcowichan](#)) ([northcowichan](#)).

Action Taken to Date (organized under the framework section's key areas of focus)

Action Items (organized under the framework section's key areas of focus)

Local Community Accessibility Grants

About this initiative

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

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

Who can apply?

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

Funding Streams

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

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

Examples of Projects that You Might Want to Consider:

The Built Environment

– Designing or building ramps
– Adding elevators or lifts
– Making washrooms and other facilities more accessible

– Making entrances more accessible including adding automatic door-openers)
– Adding audio signals, tactile strips, hearing loops and other features

Education and Awareness

– Participating in anti-bias training to develop knowledge of conscious and subconscious bias

– Training workplaces in service delivery to enable employees to meet a broader range of needs

Policies and Programs

– Development of local policies (parking, housing, building standards, bylaws)
– Funding for legal and consulting advice

– Development and implementation of local recreation or other types of programs

Modelling Inclusive Practices

– Training to review and amend interview processes
– Including ASL interpreting for events

– Accessibility audit of workflow
– Remuneration for Accessibility Advisory Committee etc.

Communication and Engagement

– Creating job task checklists in pictorial form
– Creating wayfinding signage in braille
– Creating an ASL version of information, training materials or policies

– Application forms accessible to screen readers
– Reprinting hardcopies of material in large font
– Update web pages for accessibility, etc.

The Use of Technology

– Purchasing software that enables production of accessible documents
– Flashing fire alarms for deaf employees
– Specialized headsets

– A tablet for communication
– Laptops for remote working
– Buying specialized tools for workplaces

Funding

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

Council and Accessibility Support

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

How to Apply

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

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

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

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

Compliance Questions

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

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

Louise O'Shea
Chief Operational Officer , SPARC BC
Phone: 604-718-7748
E: accessibility@sparc.bc.ca

Local Community Accessibility Grant

About this initiative

To provide local governments with up to $25,000 in funding to remove barriers for persons with disabilities by implementing one of the initiatives identified in their Accessibility Plan, or by their Accessibility Committee. It could also be an initiative that the community would like to implement based on feedback received from service users based on their feedback mechanism.

Eligible Applicants

All municipalities and regional districts in British Columbia are eligible to apply for this funding.

1. Each municipality or regional district is eligible to submit an application

2. Priority will be given to local governments that are fully compliant with Part 3 of the *Accessible B.C. Act.*

Nature of the Funding

Each local government is eligible for up to $25,000 and may select one of the following streams:

Stream 1—Local Government led projects – new

This stream is designed for local governments that already have a project that will advance accessibility or build the local-level capacity when responding to local accessibility needs or priorities.

Stream 2—Capacity support – existing/expanding

This stream is designed for local governments that may be unsure of where to start, and will focus on working together with others to build a deeper sense of existing and emerging accessibility needs or priorities.

Local governments in this stream will work with SPARC BC to define their needs and select a specific area of focus (built environment, attitudes, practices, policies, information and communication or technology). The funding will then be used to implement the specific projects or initiatives identified.

☐ Stream 1—Local Government led projects – new
☐ Stream 2—Capacity support – existing/expanding

Please provide a short overview of your proposed initiative or area of focus:

About your Project

The funding is available to support projects of varying sizes, types and complexity including projects, both new and existing, designed to:

- Remove physical barriers in the built environment
- Understand and address attitudes, practices, and policies
- Enhance information, communication, and technology

Please describe the needs or types of barriers that your initiative will address:

Which specific needs or disability groups will be served through your initiative?

What geographic area does your initiative cover?

What is the type of knowledge or insight that you hope to gain?

Types of Activities Covered

What types of activities will be delivered through your initiative?

- Ramps, elevators, lifts, accessible washrooms, power door operators, accessible doors, audio signals and loops and lighting/color contrasting for visually impaired etc. (The completed infrastructure must be open for public use)
- Anti-bias training, service delivery training
- Training or supports needed to promote safer economic inclusion, interview processes, ASL interpretation and supports for events, Accessibility Audits of workflow, remuneration for Accessibility Advisory Committee reviewing and members.
- Funding for legal and consulting advice as well as internal staff resources.
- Funding to strengthen communication designed to allow for greater inclusion
- Job task checklists in pictorial form, wayfinding signage, ASL version of policies, application forms accessible to screen readers, reprinting hardcopies of material in large font, Braille versions of documents, accessibility enhancement to the website.
- Purchasing software that enables the production of accessible documents, specialized equipment and productivity tools (headsets, tablets, laptop screenreaders).
- Other ideas as identified through your Accessibility Committee.
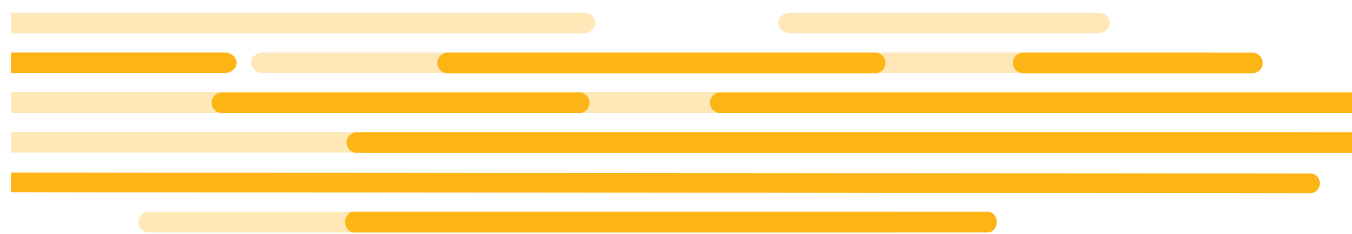
Funding Amounts

Funding will be dispersed in the following methods, all successful applicants must have all project completed by end of the grant programme and are required to submit a final report to SPARC BC by 31st March 2026.

1. For projects $10,000 or less funding will be disbursed in 1 transaction of 100%.
2. Grants above $10,000 will be dispersed in 2 transactions—80% upon return of the Terms & Conditions document and 20% upon receipt of Final Report

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS: KEY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS INCLUDING KEY MILESTONES

Please tell us about the specific steps and actions to be taken, key milestones and critical dates. Please note, it is possible to add additional pages if required. However, project applicants are only expected to provide high-level details and that SPARC BC will seek additional information or clarification if required. Completion of this table is optional for stream 2.

Key Steps and Actions	Key Milestones/Outcomes	Critical Dates
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
Conclusion: Project Outcomes Report Submission		

REQUESTED PROJECT BUDGET

The following sets out the proposed budget to complete the scope of work as outlined in the previous section. Completion of this table is optional for stream 2.

Specific Steps and Actions	Proposed Budget
1.	$
2.	$
3.	$
4.	$
5.	$
6.	$
7.	$
8.	$
9.	$
10.	$
11.	$
12.	$
TOTAL REQUESTED BUDGET AMOUNT	$

Third-party contributions

Third-party means any person or legal entity, other than the Province, who participates in the implementation of an eligible project by means of contract. The Province's share is calculated once all third-party contributions (provincial, federal, and private funds) have been deducted from the total eligible costs of the project. If third-party funding is available, it may be applied to the project outside the provincial grant portion.

In-kind Contributions

In-kind or donated contributions are not an eligible cost. In-kind contributions may include volunteer hours and/or donated professional labour, services, space and materials, which are provided at no cost or below fair market value to the Recipient.
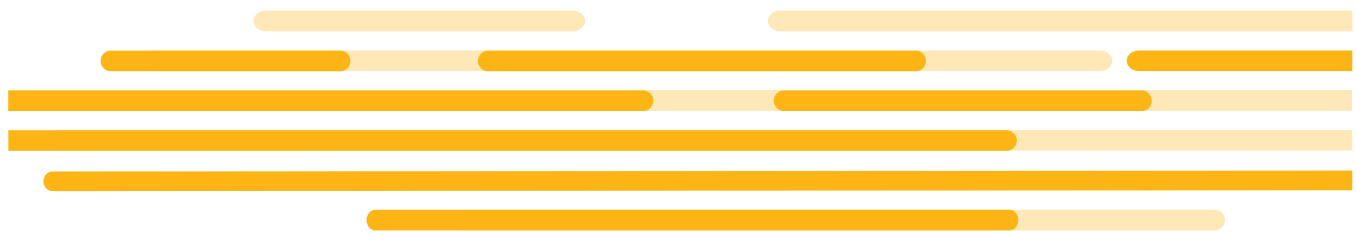
ABOUT THE APPLICANT

Tell us about your organization and key project implementation partners for this initiative:

Organization Name_____

Address_____

Contact Information

Name:	Position:
Email:	Phone:

Population:

Population size: ☐ Less than 15,000   ☐ Between 15,000 and 25,000   ☐ Over 25,000

Accessibility in your organization

Please provide a link to your organization's accessibility plan

_____

Please provide a link to your organization's feedback mechanism

_____

Does your organization currently offer service delivery training to staff?   ☐ yes   ☐ no

Does your organization measure the number of employees who identify as persons with disabilities?   ☐ yes   ☐ no

Which service area is responsible for advancing accessibility in your community?

_____

Do you have existing partnerships and relationships which focus on advancing shared accessibility goals?

_____
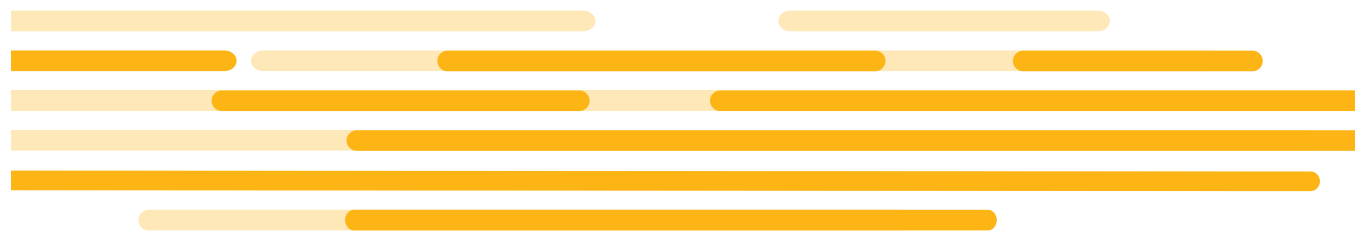
Letter of Support

Please provide a letter of support from your accessibility committee. This letter should be submitted alongside this application form as a Word document or PDF.

Signature

The signature below certifies that all the information provided in this application is complete and correct.

Applicant Name:_____

Digital Signature:_____

Date:_____

Application Checklist

☐ Accessible Communities Grant Application Form
☐ Workplan (only required for applicants in Stream 1)
☐ Proposed budget (only required for applicants in Stream 1)
☐ Letter of Support from Accessibility Advisory Committee
☐ Board Resolution/Letter of Support from CAO

Submit your Application

If you have any questions or would like to submit your application, please email accessibility@sparc.bc.ca

Thank you for your application!

Accessibility includes *all*