

AGENDA

Accessibility Committee

Wednesday, October 30, 2024 at 7:00pm
Via Zoom

Mandate: 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

Pages 2-3

Minutes of the meeting held September 25, 2024 (attached) for approval.

4. ACCESSIBILITY PLAN FRAMEWORK BRAINSTORMING

Pages 4-11

The Committee has been asked to provide suggestions regarding the Accessibility Plan framework (presented at the last meeting and attached), including recommendations to add, delete, rename or reorganize anything within the document.

5. NEW BUSINESS

6. NEXT MEETING

7. ADJOURNMENT

**MINUTES OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2024
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Diane Hobelaid, Chair
Councillor Amanda Jacobson
Joel Helland (*via Zoom*)
Jordan Herbison (*via Zoom*)

Andy Hobelaid
Shaun McKenzie (*via Zoom*)
Christina Stephen

STAFF PRESENT

Sue Bouma (Manager of Corporate Services)
Richard Frost (Manager of Facility Operations)

Nick Pescod (Communications & Engagement Specialist)

**CALL TO ORDER AND
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Ms. Hobelaid, Chair, called the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting to order at 7:08 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 September 25, 2024 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee be approved as presented.
Motion carried.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Moved and seconded:
That the minutes of the May 22, 2024 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting be approved.
Motion carried.

**UNIVERSAL DESIGN
PRINCIPLES**

Diane Hobelaid, Chair, provided background information and a link to the Universal Design Principles from the Centre for Excellence and asked that the document be added as an addendum to the Accessibility Plan.

**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN
FRAMEWORK FOR
REVIEW**

The Committee agreed to bring suggestions regarding the Accessibility Plan framework to the next meeting, including recommendations to add, delete, rename or reorganize anything within the document.

**MANAGER OF
FACILITY
OPERATIONS**

Richard Frost, Manager of Facility Operations, reviewed recently completed accessibility upgrades, such as the installation of an automatic door opener from the everyone change room to the pool deck and the replacement of push buttons on other automatic door openers with more accessible push plates. Moveable signage was

also incorporated at FJCC during peak times to ensure maximum adaptable parking spaces are available. He noted that the application of contrasting paint colours to improve visibility on stair treads and nosings is ongoing. Future upgrades will include some braille signage and flashing lights at exits.

**GRANT
OPPORTUNITY**

Councillor Jacobson brought forward an accessibility grant opportunity from Sparc BC. Some suggestions for potential projects included improving sidewalk entry points, adding automatic door openers to the downtown washrooms, creating a pathway to the Kinsmen Shelter at Transfer Beach, improving the lower parking lot at FJCC to increase accessibility, adding more braille and tactile signage to key areas in the Town and adding grab bars and folding down chairs in the changerooms at FJCC. The Committee was asked to send additional project suggestions to Richard Frost.

NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to meet electronically for its next meeting on October 30, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved and seconded:
That this Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting be adjourned at 8:10 p.m.
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.

Very rough draft

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](#)).

Very rough draft

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](#)).

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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)

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