

AGENDA
Accessibility, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee
Held virtually via MS Teams,
Wednesday, November 22, 2023, at 5:15 p.m.

The District of Saanich lies within the territories of the ləkʷəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the WSÁNEĆ peoples represented by the Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tseycum and Malahat Nations.

We are committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community. We are guided by the principle that embracing diversity enriches the lives of all people. We all share the responsibility for creating an equitable and inclusive community and for addressing discrimination in all forms.

- 1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES** (Attachment)
 - September 6 and October 4, 2023
- 2. CHAIR'S REMARKS**
- 3. ACCESSIBILITY PLAN CONSIDERATION**
 - Sheila Allen, Director of Corporate Services, Corporate Services Department
 - Dale Samsonoff, Manager, HR Planning and Programs
- 4. FINAL REMARKS**

To ensure quorum, please contact Angela Hawkshaw at 250-475-5494 ext. 3505 or angela.hawkshaw@saanich.ca if you are unable to attend.

MINUTES
ACCESSIBILITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Committee Rm. 2 and via Microsoft Teams
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Road
September 6, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Mena Westhaver, Maya Bosdet (via Teams), Rae Franklin (via Teams), Stephan Herman, Laurie-Anne Keith, Donald Kennedy, Rachid Ouache (via Teams), Shapna Mazumber and Reed Poynter.

Staff: Sheila Allen, Director, Corporate Services; Troy McKay, Senior Manager of Transportation & Development Services (via Teams); Dale Samsonoff, Manager of People and Programs; Allison Newcomb, Human Resource Associate Advisor; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Kam Judge

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the committee members, and the following was noted:

- The Terms Of Reference were amended and adopted by Council on August 10, 2023.
- The next meeting date may change to November 8, 2023.
- A new committee member will be appointed in the fall to replace the member that has left.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by L. Keith and Seconded by S. Herman: "That the Minutes of the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting dated May 31, 2023 be adopted."

The committee made the following comments during discussion about the minutes:

- An endorsement from the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) Committee for the draft plan or staff's approach to developing the plan, was not expressed clearly via a motion.
- Committee consensus was that of support for the draft plan.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

OVERVIEW OF THE DRAFT ACCESSIBILITY PLAN PRESENTATION

Melissa Lyon, Accessibility & Inclusion Matter Consulting, gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file) and the following was noted:

- Copies of the draft plan are available to the public, and questions and comments are welcome.
- The goal for this session is to:
 - Provide information about the Draft Accessibility Plan
 - To introduce the Accessibility Feedback Mechanism
 - To answer questions and receive feedback from the ADEI members.
- This process began when the *Accessible British Columbia Act* (2021) was introduced, and Saanich has met the following deadlines:
 - To have a draft plan posted publicly by September 1, 2023
 - To assemble an accessibility committee
 - To create a feedback mechanism
- Employee input has been collected. A request for public input will begin in the fall.
- This multi-year plan will be in place until 2026. Reviews and feedback will be ongoing.
- Statistics Canada has found that Canadian residents living with disabilities face many barriers.
- The employment rate for persons with disabilities has recently risen from 59% to 65% for women and to 69% for men.
- In Saanich it is estimated that 22% of students over the age of 15 are living with one or more disabilities.
- The purpose of this plan is to increase awareness, improve accessibility within Saanich and provide ways to give feedback.
- Three themes that have emerged from the consultation are:
 - Recommendations for change should be made by people that are directly affected.
 - Creation of accessible spaces should be proactive and thoughtful, not reactionary.
 - Access to facilities, programs and services should be accessible for all.
- Saanich has many accessibility achievements including:
 - A new website design with colour, print size and language options
 - Inclusion training for recreation staff
 - Improvements to washrooms, elevators, and pathways.
- Saanich employees feel that they are cared about and as a District and adapt to support them.
- Of the many barriers that the Saanich staff has identified, attitudinal barriers is a prominent theme throughout.
- The priorities identified are, awareness and training, built environment improvements, increased access to policies, procedures, and feedback. There are many actions to support achieving these priorities.
- Saanich has created a feedback mechanism to give the public the opportunity to offer input by phone, email or in person.
- Some of the next steps are to:
 - Apply for grants
 - Continue to consult with employees and the public through the feedback mechanism
 - Update the Saanich website to include an Accessibility Hub

The committee made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- Using the word “community” rather than “culture” is a more accurate description of Saanich.
- Including the words “everyone who is a resident of Saanich can continue to grow and thrive” is a more personal approach.
- Developing individual emergency plans for community members could be included in the training for emergency preparedness. Funding for this can be supplied through the budget process and grants.
- Training is needed for emergency responders to assist individuals with equipment like oxygen tanks.
- Sidewalk accessibility in Saanich is part of the built environment improvements priority.
- Multiple languages and braille would be helpful on all signage in Saanich. The sight loss community can assist in the appropriate placement of braille.
- Audio presentations or QR codes on signage would be a helpful option.
- A welcome kiosk in the Municipal Hall parking lot would promote accessibility.
- A presentation from staff to explain the plans for increasing accessibility within the Municipal Hall would be an appropriate future agenda item.
- People with disabilities and accessibility challenges could be involved in the process of choosing new software programs and overseeing environmental improvements.
- A catalogue of assistive devices and accommodations for employees is a suggestion given by staff input. Clarity would be appreciated on if the items already exist or are budgeted to acquire.
- The voluntary design guidelines for adaptable housing should be a legislated requirement.
- Standardized guidelines for our emergency response teams needs clarification.
- In general, the hiring process for equality can be a challenge.
- The word “should” could be changed to “can” under the “Nothing about us without us” theme.

FLOATING BUS STOPS

Reed Poynter, committee member, gave a presentation and following was noted:

- 18% to 20% of people in BC have some form of a disability.
- Cycling is a choice, having a disability is not.
- Transit is the only means of transportation for a large demographic of people.
- Designers need to recognize the priorities of these people and design accordingly.
- Bike lanes are a safety concern for people in the sight loss community.
- Internationally, the floating bus stop design has been introduced adjacent to bike lanes in order to assist cyclists.
- Floating bus stops are situated between the curb lane and the roadway. Many of these configurations are dangerously situated especially for the sight loss community.
- The sight loss community is not the only group of people that are affected by the future design of the floating bus stops.
- Where there is no stoplight, the reliance is on the cyclist to stop.
- Crossing the bike lane to board the bus is a concern for people with vision challenges due to potentially dangerous encounters with cyclists.

- There are five elements of design for the floating bus stops that should be considered with accessibility in mind:
 - Sidewalk
 - The edge of the sidewalk before the bike lane
 - Bike lane
 - The edge of the bus island
 - Bus island
- A universal design would assist in making these lanes safe and accessible for all. Tactile markings on the edge of the sidewalks and the bus island are options.
- Multiple experiments within Victoria have shown that the current signage to slow down and yield is being ignored by cyclists.
- The Rick Hansen Foundation recorded 21 cyclists ignoring the signage before one stopped to allow a person to cross.
- BC transit and TransLink are looking to create guidelines for the province.
- Recommendations to Saanich about the potential problems with the floating bus lanes would be appreciated.
- The use of electronic bikes is on the rise.

The committee made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- A physical barrier design is not available between sidewalks and bike lanes.
- There are challenges within the *B.C. Motor Vehicle Act* concerning controlled traffic signals and how they are used.
- A polarized yellow light could be an option for the crosswalks.

The Senior Manager of Transportation & Development Services made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- The presentation was an effective way to highlight the challenges with the floating bus stop design.
- Feedback is being collected across the province through TransLink, the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and B.C. Transit to assist in the new design.
- Saanich has volunteered to be a test community for the new guidelines that are being developed.
- In October the public and the committee are invited to visit the testing sight for evaluation.
- The test sites have been installed with duct work that is retrofitted to anticipate future regulations.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Councillor Westhaver, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

MINUTES
ACCESSIBILITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Via Microsoft Teams
October 4, 2023, at 5:02 p.m.

Present: Councillor Mena Westhaver, Stephan Herman, Laurie-Anne Keith (5:06 p.m.), Donald Kennedy, and Reed Poynter.

Staff: Paul de Greef, Parks Planning and Development Manager; Ryan Hix, Project Delivery Manager; Dale Samsonoff, People and Programs Manager; Becky Goodall, Park Planner Designer; Allison Newcomb, HR Associate Advisor; Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Maya Bosdet, Rae Franklin, Kam Judge, Shapna Mazumber, Rachid Ouache

Due to lack of quorum, no motions were passed.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the committee members, and the following was noted:

- The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) meeting was exciting and informative.
- The Walk-and-Roll Accessibility Tour report will be emailed to the committee members.
- Ensuring Safety, Accessibility and Independence in Active Travel Schemes for Blind and Visually Impaired Bus Passengers event was enlightening and well attended.
- Applications for the Appointment to Advisory Committees, Foundations and Boards will be accepted until November 10, 2023.
- The Committee Recognition Event is on October 19, 2023, and all members are encouraged to attend.

ACCESSIBILITY PLANS FOR THE MUNICIPAL HALL

The Project Delivery Manager gave the following presentation (PowerPoint on file), and the following was noted:

- In 1965, the Saanich Municipal Hall opened. In 2004, it was designated as a heritage building. The building codes have vastly changed since 1965 and applications for upgrades can be challenging.
- The building has three stories and one elevator.
- More workplace toilets and bathrooms are required.
- The wheelchair accessible bathroom is located on the first floor and will be upgraded in November 2023.
- The number of staff in the hall has increased and office space is limited.
- There are new security requirements for the hall which will secure staff-only areas.

- The two committee rooms on the main floor will have push-to-open activation switches installed.
- The Human Resources Department, Communications Department and staff lunchroom will be accessible to staff only.
- The public area on the second and third floor will have new public counters and security doors. Push-to-open activation switches are a future opportunity.
- A low accessible counter will allow room for a wheelchair.
- The reception area desk will be lowered for accessibility in the future.
- Hearing loops are a possible solution for the acrylic barrier shields.
- Single toilet washrooms are now multigender.
- The second and third floor washrooms are available to the public.
- Exterior signage has been updated to the active wheelchair symbol.
- 13 facilities in Saanich are under assessment for an upgrade.
- The draft estimate cost to update the municipal hall is \$2,000,000.
- Aisle widths are narrower due to the increase of work stations and this will be addressed.

The committee made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- Accessibility for staff may decrease due to the security upgrades.
- Funding could be considered by Council.
- The architect's report will not be made public. A summary could be available.
- The operators of each building provided excellent feedback.
- Customer feedback about the accessibility upgrades was encouraging.
- Plexiglass is difficult for the site loss community and more drilled holes could help.

The Chair made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- The draft report estimate cost includes all 13 locations and is for the highest standard. There are improvements that can be done for a lower cost. Prioritizing projects with a phased approach will be important.
- The staff lunchroom is accessible from the outside. The size of the wheelchair will determine the accessibility.

The Project Delivery Manager exited the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

PEOPLE, PETS, AND PARKS – PLANNING AND DESIGN

The Park Plan Designer gave the following presentation (PowerPoint on file), and the following was noted:

- Accessibility guidelines and strategies are used within parks.
- Universal design and signage that is easy to read is a general rule.
- 8 accessible washrooms have been upgraded.
- Useable and accessible trail systems have been enhanced on Mt. Tolmie.
- Playgrounds are replaced and repaired regularly. Equipment is constantly upgraded.
- Wood chips qualify as an accessible surface material.

- Playground equipment have transfer stations for physical or visually handicapped children.
- The beach mat at Gyro Park is the only one in Saanich. It is challenging to keep clear from debris but is well used.
- The benches at Lambrick Park are designed to be accessible. The tables have extended ends and concrete pads for wheelchairs.
- The *Enabling Accessibility Fund* has provided some funding for various projects in Saanich's parks.
- Topography is a challenge in many of the parks.
- The leash optional parks have wider trails and grades that will allow for all users.
- Enclosed leash optional areas could be developed with wider gates to enter, material to accommodate walking aids and wheelchairs, seating, and clear signage.
- The People, Pets, Parks strategy is not a design concept. The considerations are part of the design process. Saanich is currently in the strategy stage.
- PKOLS parking lot is having several upgrades done to the walkways and curb letdowns.
- A future presentation to the committee about Park design is welcome.
- Information gathered from the *Pop-up Dog Parks pilot project* has offered insight for future facilities and the amenities they could provide. The learning outcomes included the durability of the fencing and the maintenance requirements for the turf. This program was in place for 5 months. A phased approach is expected and new locations could be explored.

The Parks Planning and Development Manager and the Parks Plan Designer exited the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

ACCESSIBILITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION UPDATES

The Manager of People and Programs gave an overview of the report (on file), and the following was noted:

- On August 31st, 2023, the draft plan was released. Feedback is being gathered from the community through focus groups and email correspondence.
- The consulting engagement is complete.
- The engagement results and the final plan will be presented at the November 8th, 2023 to the committee.
- The hope is that the committee will move to endorse the final plan which will then be brought to Council for adoption.

The committee made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- A description of the pictures on the website would be helpful to the sight loss community.
- The organizations that have provided feedback have been sent a copy of the draft.
- The volume of community feedback has been low. This could indicate that the public is pleased and accepting of the draft.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 8, 2023.

Councillor Westhaver, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

MINUTES
ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Committee Rm. 2 and via Microsoft Teams
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue
November 8, 2023, at 5:15 p.m.

Present: Councillor Mena Westhaver, Rae Franklin, Donald Kennedy (5:11 p.m.), Swapna Mazumber.

Staff: Sheila Allen, Director, Corporate Services (5:34 p.m.); Rebecca Newlove, Manager of Sustainability; Dale Samsonoff, Manager of People and Programs, Human Resources; Captain Erin Stockhill, Emergency Program Officer; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk.

Guest: Mais Hajai, Consultant.

Regrets: Maya Bosdet, Stephan Herman, Kam Judge, Laurie-Anne Keith, Rachid Ouache, Reed Poynter.

Due to lack of quorum, no motions were passed.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the committee members, and the following was noted:

- Thanks were given to the members and staff that gave time and energy to the committee.
- Members were asked to submit their applications for committee appointment in 2024.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN CONSIDERATION

The Manager of Human Resources gave the following update (report on file), and the following was noted:

- The plan was put together efficiently to meet the Provincial deadline, September 3, 2023.
- The feedback that was received from the public was minimal.
- As the plan is implemented, feedback from community service providers and community members is expected.
- Feedback gathered was passed on to the appropriate areas within Saanich.
- The changes have been grouped by theme:
 - Updated Language
 - Emergency Response
 - Access
 - Bylaws and Guidelines
 - Transportation
 - Built Environment
 - Processes

The committee members made the following comments, and the following was noted:

- Genetic conditions could be included in the updated language.
- Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) could be a useful tool.
- Mental health support is not under the jurisdiction of Saanich.
- A decision-making framework for staff and Council could be presented to the committee for consideration in the future.
- People who are facing increased costs due to disabilities can find it challenging to afford the programs offered in Saanich. Funding opportunities could be included in the plan.
- Multiple platforms and opportunities to give feedback is appreciated.
- Reporting will happen annually to the committee and to Council.
- The plan will be updated every 3 years.

ACCESSIBILITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

The Emergency Program Officer gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file) and the following was noted:

- Feedback for this plan is appreciated.
- The Accessibility and Emergency Response Plan is one of seven divisions within the Fire Department.
- The emergency program supports municipal efforts to prepare for, respond to and recover from major emergencies.
- The local government does not have the ability to close due to an emergency.
- The emergency program has 3 full time staff members.
- The program is supported by more than 100 volunteers.
- Materials are accessible through online platforms, public engagements, and mail out flyers. This helps to reach people of all ages, accessibility, and ethnicities.
- Grab-and-go bags are part of a Grade 4 initiative in elementary schools. The intention is to reach all households, regardless of mobility or socioeconomic status.
- Results from a survey in 2019 showed that time, cost, space, and complacency are barriers to emergency preparedness.
- The Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Presentations are hosted in person and online for free at Saanich Recreation Centres. Private presentations are available upon request.
- Alert Ready is Canada's emergency alerting system that delivers critical and potentially life-saving alerts to Canadians through television, radio, and compatible wireless devices.
- In 2022, the Province introduced the ability to issue emergency alerts for wildfires, floods, and extreme heat. These are in addition to tsunamis, civil emergencies, and Amber Alerts.
- Emergency Support Services (ESS) is critically important and central to community well-being.
- 24 recommendations were put forward to the Ministry of Emergency and Climate Readiness (EMCR) and were passed. Some of these recommendations are, accessibility and culture safety, strengthening support for community-led ESS, and support for people who are displaced long term. The timeline for the implementation is March 2024.

- Saanich is a leader in adopting modernized emergency support services and delivery.
- The virtual reception centre allows volunteers with all abilities to serve the community.
- ShakeOut and the BC Earthquake alliance are working to make their messaging more accessible and to include awareness of those who may not be able to drop, cover and hold on.
- Partnership and collaboration are essential to the success of this program and to educate the public.

The committee members made the following comments:

- The four main recreation centres are the Reception Centres for information in the event of an emergency. Evacuation routes are not available as each emergency calls for a different course of action.
- Local governments have access to Provincial notifications.
- A registration system for individualized emergency support could be implemented.
- The equipment and training that is provided to emergency responders is accessible and extensive.
- Training exercises in the recreation centres are done twice a year. These exercises provide feedback for accessibility during an emergency.

The Emergency Program Officer exited the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

DPA DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Manager of Sustainability gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file), and the following was noted:

- The *Local Government Act* provides authority to designate Development Permit (DP) Guidelines to establish form and character objectives and to designate areas of land as Development Permit Areas (DPA) for certain purposes. DPAs must specify guidelines for how proposals in that area can address the special conditions or objectives of the DPA.
- DP Guidelines support staff in an efficient review of applications, as well as provide direction and guidance to applicants, review committees (e.g., Advisory Design Panel) and Council to support a common understanding of expectations.
- The guidelines should be educative, descriptive, consistent, and clear on intent.
- The existing Saanich Development Permit Areas (DPA): Justification and Guidelines document is a patchwork of Development Permit Areas (DPAs) and guidelines that have not undergone a comprehensive review since before the Official Community Plan (OCP) was approved in 2008.
- Many policies and plans have been approved by Council including the 2008 OCP and multiple planning documents that contain design guidelines. For example, garden suites have their own.
- The purpose is to develop a simplified, consolidated Guidelines document that is aligned with the OCP and recent policies, plans and bylaws that have been approved by Council. The goal is a harmonized, easy to use document with clear

language, explanatory visual illustrations, and alignment with other goals.

- The guidelines will be updated more frequently as new policies are approved.
- The new simplified and consolidated document will improve efficiency and aid staff in achieving targets as laid out in various plans.
- A descriptive (vs. prescriptive) approach has been taken, with clear statements of design intent including strategies and best practices for implementation.
- More prescriptive guidance such as metrics have been added, for built form, scale, orientation, and relationship to public spaces. A more descriptive and educative approach was taken for character, composition, and site planning.

FINAL REMARKS

The Chair commented and the following was noted:

- Thank you to the staff that worked with tight deadlines to create the Accessibility plan.

The committee members made the following comments:

- Thank you to the Chair and the staff for the time spent on presentations.
- Funding for this plan is hopeful.
- This committee has a lot to offer in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Councillor Westhaver, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
From: Sheila Allen, Director of Corporate Services
Date: October 27, 2023
Subject: Accessibility Feedback and Final Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee receive this report for information.

That the Committee endorse the final Accessibility Plan and direct staff to present the Accessibility Plan to Council for adoption.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee regarding accessibility feedback provided by the public and staffs' recommended actions which has resulted in updates to the draft plan.

DISCUSSION

Saanich posted the Draft Accessibility Plan by September 1st 2023 to meet the legislative deadline. The draft was informed by staff representation from all departments and the Saanich Police as well as inputs from this Committee.

Since that time, the plan has been promoted, three public engagement sessions have been held, and feedback has been encouraged via email, phone or in person.

All feedback has been themed and staff have received and actioned all items as per the Summary of Recommendations and Actions [attachment A](#). Over thirty-five items have been noted resulting in minor language amendments to the Draft Plan as well as additional action items. Amendments to the draft plan can be seen as indicated on [attachment B: Final Plan \(changes marked\)](#). If endorsed, the final document would be presented to council as attached without markup.

Some of the feedback provided will require additional consideration, is out-of-scope, or involves collaboration or communication with external parties. These items have not resulted in specific updates to the plan at this time; however, the actions have been noted as per attachment A.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the Committee adopt the recommendations as outlined in the staff report.
2. That Council does not adopt the recommendation(s) as outlined in the staff report.
3. That Council provide alternate direction to Staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Accessibility Plan action items will likely have financial impacts and may result in staff requesting additional resources through the budget approval process.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Creation and implementation of an Accessibility Plan is located on the Council Strategic Plan as action item 2.1.2.

CONCLUSION

Given the fulsome approach to the creation of this plan and in consideration of legislative requirements, staff recommend that the Committee endorse the final Accessibility Plan as provided and recommend that this plan be brought forward to Council for adoption.

Prepared by



Sheila Allen

Director of Corporate Services

Attachments:

- A: Summary of Recommendations and Actions
- B: Final Accessibility Plan (changes marked)

cc: Brent Reems, CAO

Attachment A: Summary of Recommendations and Actions

	RECOMMENDATIONS	STAFF ACTIONS
UPDATED LANGUAGE		
1	<p>Amend Our Commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion. Change to: inclusive and welcoming community.... so that everyone in our community can continue to grow and thrive"</p>	Update the language accordingly.
2	<p>Amend the Nothing about us without us. Change the word "should" to "can."</p>	Update the language accordingly.
3	<p>Photo descriptors. Include descriptors for all the photos to increase accessibility of the plan.</p>	Captions are embedded in photos to be read by a screen-reader. Staff are reviewing for best practice
4	<p>Types of disabilities. Addition of other types of disabilities including immune suppression, fatigue and environmental sensitivities or allergies.</p>	Definitions are based on Statistics Canada reporting. No change at this time.
EMERGENCY RESPONSE		
1	<p>Individual emergency plans. Suggest developing individual emergency plans for community members as part of the training for emergency preparedness.</p>	Shared feedback with parties completing action 3.1.6, "review emergency planning procedures and equipment to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities have been considered" to ensure this is included in the review. Post review may result in further actions as suggested.
2	<p>Increased emergency training. Provide training for emergency responders to assist individuals with required equipment, such as oxygen tanks.</p>	Included in action 1.2.3. "Provide training in disability awareness as it relates to emergency preparedness."
3	<p>Voluntary database. Suggest the creation of a voluntary database where individuals could register specific need for emergency responders.</p>	Voluntary database will be considered after initial review of emergency planning has been completed (action 3.1.6). Resource and privacy implications would need to be fully assessed.
ACCESS		
1	<p>Signage. Ensure the action item regarding updating signage to include symbols and large print also includes a variety of languages and braille (where applicable).</p>	Shared feedback to support the recreation centre wayfinding and signage multi-year project (action 2.1.3).
2	<p>Signage. Assess signage for opportunities to add audio presentations or QR codes.</p>	Shared feedback to support the recreation centre wayfinding and signage multi-year project (action 2.1.3).
3	<p>Welcome kiosk. Addition of a welcome kiosk in Municipal Hall parking lot to promote accessibility.</p>	Provided feedback to the engineering department to support the recent physical accessibility review (action 2.1.1).
4	<p>Assistive devices. Clarify if the action item regarding the catalogue of assistive devices and accommodations regards existing items or items that need to be purchased.</p>	Clarified and updated the language of action 3.1.3 for increased reading clarity.

Attachment A: Summary of Recommendations and Actions

5	<p>Recreation registration systems. Search function and registration method for courses with recreation challenging to use and navigate.</p>	<p>Added an action to review the recreation registration system for accessibility.</p>
6	<p>Online representation of access. Information available online about the accessibility of municipal facilities tends to be somewhat limited. As a wheelchair user, this makes it difficult to know whether I can participate in activities at Saanich facilities. For example, it's unclear whether I can access the arts centre, meeting rooms, or activity rooms at the Cedar Hill Rec Centre. Information about the GR Pearkes Rec Centre is particularly limited. It seems to me that the accessibility information on facility web pages tends to consist of bullet lists of equipment that has been installed to improve accessibility. This is useful, but it doesn't paint a full picture of what access looks like at the facilities. Touring the facilities with people who have various disabilities and use various mobility aids and revising the information available online based on their feedback/input would be ideal. Typically, the most useful information details what isn't currently accessible.</p>	<p>Added an action to update the recreation centre accessibility information available online based on feedback from people with disabilities.</p>
7	<p>Mental health. Services which support community members struggling with mental health are not connected and do not provide uninterrupted support.</p>	<p>Outside of the scope of District of Saanich.</p>
8	<p>Financial barriers. Cost of programming in Saanich can be inaccessible, especially for families who are facing increased costs due to a disability.</p>	<p>Added an action to create an equity review guide to support application across corporate decision making.</p>
9	<p>Financial barriers. The draft accessibility plan does not meaningfully contend with the financial barriers faced by many disabled people. Disabled adults are far less likely to be employed than their nondisabled counterparts, and provincial disability assistance rates leave most recipients below the poverty line. Saanich already has some programs in place that address this issue (including the LIFE program and the Leisure Assistant Pass), so it's strange not seeing that reflected in the plan. (Note: this might be included under priority 2.1.6, but the language there is unclear).</p>	<p>Added an action to create an equity review guide to support application across corporate decision making.</p> <p>Updated action 2.1.6 for clarity.</p>
10	<p>Strategic/planning documents Received feedback regarding off-leash dog parks and District's strategic approach.</p>	<p>Added an action to create an equity review guide to support application across corporate decision making.</p>
11	<p>Inclusion workers training. I have a 5 year old child with a permanent disability and global developmental delay. He is unable to toilet himself</p>	<p>Inclusion training is delivered by Island Health; have shared feedback with them with the intent to improve training moving forward.</p>

Attachment A: Summary of Recommendations and Actions

	<p>independently and requires diapers. He has been denied entry to day camps because of this. The training for inclusion workers needs to include this basic necessity. I have been told that I can pay for a private 1:1 worker or attend myself but on a single income, that is not realistic or fair.</p>	
12	<p>Chronic illnesses. The document contains no explicit reference to chronic illness, a type of disability that is particularly relevant given the impacts of COVID. For example, chronic illness can make people more susceptible to serious illness from contracting COVID and can be caused by COVID itself. As of August, 2022, more than 1.4 million Canadians had experienced Long COVID. Extrapolating from recent data figures suggests more than 15,000 Saanich residents have experienced Long COVID. [1] Many people who are more susceptible to COVID infection are barred from participating in Saanich activities because of the lack of clearly communicated mitigation measures taken by the district. In my case, due to my severe chronic illness, I am unable to visit Saanich's recreation centres or attend Saanich council/committee meetings in person because of a lack of indoor air filtration (or, perhaps, a lack of clearly communicated information about air filtration efforts).</p>	<p>Included air filter information in accessibility information of the recreation centres (as referenced in Access, 6 above).</p>
BYLAWS & GUIDELINES		
1	<p>Adaptable housing. Change the voluntary adaptable housing guidelines to be fully or partially mandatory.</p>	<p>Provided the recommendation to Planning Department for consideration.</p>
TRANSPORTATION		
1	<p>Curb cuts. While curb cuts are in the right place, cracks and gaps between the curb cut and road can make them difficult to use.</p>	<p>Provided feedback to support the ongoing active transportation plan (action 2.1.2).</p>
2	<p>Sidewalks and curb cuts. Expansion cracks, curb cuts and uneven older sidewalks cause pain for those in mobility scooters.</p>	<p>Provided feedback to support the ongoing active transportation plan (action 2.1.2).</p>
3	<p>Sidewalks. Sidewalks are not wide enough for a mobility scooter to pass a walker.</p>	<p>Provided feedback to support the ongoing active transportation plan (action 2.1.2).</p>
4	<p>Sidewalks. Many sidewalks are discontinued partway on a street, forcing walkers to walk on the road.</p>	<p>Provided feedback to support the ongoing active transportation plan (action 2.1.2).</p>
5	<p>Traffic control. Lack of traffic control coming down W Saanich Road from Royal Oak (near Cheeseman). Hard for walkers of varying abilities to cross safely here.</p>	<p>Provided feedback to support the ongoing active transportation plan (action 2.1.2).</p>

Attachment A: Summary of Recommendations and Actions

6	Bus stops. Add braille or raised bus stop numbers.	Provided feedback to support the ongoing active transportation plan (action 2.1.2).
7	Bus stops. While the District has added very accessible bus stops there is no signage to indicate this, or way to locate which bus stops are accessible on google maps.	Provided feedback to support the ongoing active transportation plan (action 2.1.2). Provided feedback to BC Transit for improvement.
BUILT ENVIRONMENT		
1	Door entry. Labelling of more doors if they are push or pull, especially interior doors where it can be hard to tell.	Provided feedback to support the ongoing initiatives as part of the physical accessibility review (action 2.1.1).
2	Parking stalls. Paint on parking stalls designating accessible parking stalls wearing off in a number of places. Examples: Thrifty Foods at Tuscan Village (2) University Heights Pharmacy (1), and an X across from the accessible space, allowing space for walkers is also faded.	Added an action to review the current accessible parking stalls within the District.
3	Parking stalls. There are insufficient accessible parking stalls in the district to meet the needs of the public.	Added an action to review the current accessible parking stalls within the District.
4	Parking stalls. More accessible parking stalls are needed at Municipal Hall and recreation centres with increased signage to help new visitors find them.	Added an action to review the current accessible parking stalls within the District.
5	Rental units. There are insufficient affordable rental units which meet accessibility needs.	Provided feedback to Planning department to inform future housing initiatives within the District.
6	Saanich Commonwealth Place. Doors to rooms (example Douglas Fir) are heavy and hard to open; need automatic door openers.	Provided feedback to support the ongoing initiatives as part of the physical accessibility review (action 2.1.1).
7	Panama Flats. There is no access for a motorized chair as the trail uses pebbles, instead of crush/hardpack surface.	Provided this feedback to support action 2.1.4, "continue to increase accessibility in District parks and playgrounds."
Processes		
1	Cross-municipality communication. Suggest greater communication between municipalities to allow for sharing of ideas, and improvements throughout the larger area.	Created action for Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Consultant to facilitate connections with other municipalities.
2	Annual report. Suggest reporting annually on the accessibility work done to date.	Measures and indicators on the Accessibility Plan will be reported on as per regular reporting structures.
3	Permit process. The permitting process is very cumbersome which can make creating more accessible spaces challenging.	Permitting processes are currently under review.
4	Employment process. Suggest an increase in part-time positions to support employment of persons with disabilities.	Provided feedback to support action 3.4.2 "review employment practices for accessibility and inclusion."



Style Definition: TOC 1

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District of Saanich Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2026

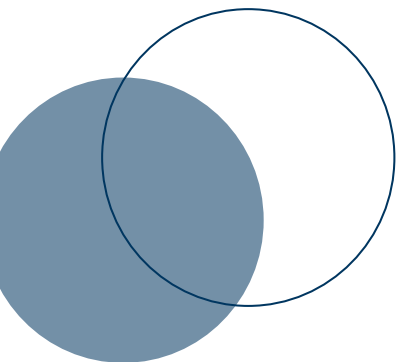
DRAFT: Aug. 29, 2023

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the District of Saanich lies within the territories of the lək'wəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the W SÁNEĆ peoples represented by the W JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), STÁUTW (Tsawout), W SIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) Nations.

Diversity Statement

Saanich is committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community and we are guided by the principle that embracing diversity enriches the lives of all people. Council and staff share the responsibility for creating an equitable and inclusive community and for addressing discrimination in all forms.



Acknowledgement

This plan was developed by the District of Saanich, with the support of Melissa Lyon of Accessibility & Inclusion Matter Consulting.

Thank you to the many people who contributed their thoughts and suggestions to the creation of this document.

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Accessibility Statement

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](#). If you require an alternative format, contact AccessibilityFeedback@Saanich.ca.

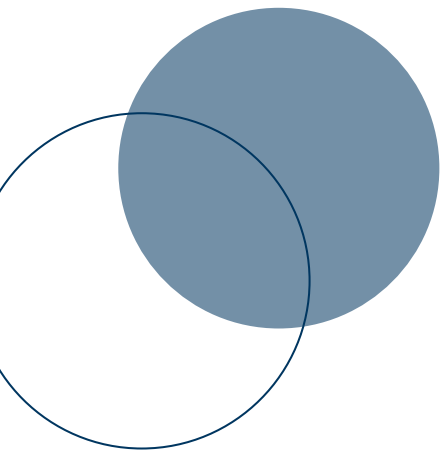


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Introduction

About the District of Saanich

With more than 117,735 residents, Saanich is the largest municipality in the Capital Region. It occupies a central position within the region – immediately north of the City of Victoria and sharing boundaries with Highlands, View Royal, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, and Central Saanich. As the gateway to the metropolitan core, Saanich provides key transportation links to the airport, ferry terminal, Western Communities, Saanich Peninsula, and the rest of Vancouver Island. Saanich’s physical setting contains a mix of marine shoreline, freshwater lakes, natural watercourses, and diverse rolling topography with elevations ranging from sea level to 355 m. Approximately half the municipality is urban and half rural/agricultural – a dual role that has influenced its character and development.

Our Commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion

The District of Saanich and Saanich Police Department strive to create an inclusive and welcoming culture, where people of all ages and abilities feel included and can equally access the facilities, services, and programs. In our daily work, we endeavour to apply an accessibility lens to all aspects of what we do.

Saanich is committed to identifying and removing barriers that persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups face. Our goal is to meet or exceed the Accessible B.C. Act requirements, so that everyone in our community Saanich can continue to grow and thrive.

Messages

The Mayor of Saanich & Chief Administrative Officer

On behalf of Saanich Council and the entire District of Saanich, we are pleased to introduce our new Accessibility Plan, a roadmap that reflects our support for accessibility, diversity equity and inclusion.

We firmly believe that the true strength of a community lies in its ability to embrace and celebrate all residents. Saanich's greatest asset is our community and their experiences, backgrounds, abilities, and perspectives.

Our goal is to go beyond just meeting compliance standards. This Plan reflects our collective commitment to creating an accessible, inclusive and welcoming environment where every individual can fully participate. We encourage each of you to join us on this journey as we continue to build a strong community where everyone belongs.



Mayor Dean Murdock



CAO Brent Reems

ADEI Committee Chair

In support of furthering the District of Saanich’s accessibility and inclusion initiatives, the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (ADEI) Committee endorses this Accessibility Plan. This document will be revised over time as we continue to implement our action items and as we receive additional feedback.



*ADEI Committee Chair,
Councillor Mena Westhaver*

We would like to thank the Saanich leadership team and the members of the ADEI staff committee. They have shown great commitment and dedication to this plan and are working hard to create a more accessible and inclusive Saanich community.

Saanich Police Board

The Saanich Police Board provides independent oversight and governance of the Saanich Police Department. The Board looks forward to working with the Saanich Police Department and the District of Saanich to reduce barriers and enhance accessibility through awareness and training, building environmental improvements, and increasing access to services. The Board thanks staff and committee members for input provided to date and looks forward to community input as the Saanich Police Department expands its actions to increase accessibility.



*Police Board Chair,
Mayor Dean Murdock*

Definitions

The following definitions may be useful to keep in mind as you are reading this plan:

Accessibility	Accessibility involves developing laws, standards, and practices that remove barriers and support persons with disabilities to live with dignity and to meaningfully participate in their own communities. ¹
Accommodation	The employer's responsibility under the B.C. Human Rights Code to adapt the workplace to meet the needs of the individual employee. ²
Barrier	Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and can be affected by intersecting forms of discrimination. ³
Disability	An inability to participate fully and equally in society because of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier. ³
Impairment	An impairment can be a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment - whether permanent, temporary, or episodic. ³
Inclusion	An attitude and approach that embraces diversity and differences and promotes equal opportunities for all. Inclusion is not just about persons with disabilities. When our communities include and embrace everyone, we are ALL better able to reach our full potential. ⁴

The District of Saanich recognizes this is an emerging field with diverging perspectives. As such we have aligned our language with [the Accessible BC Act](#), [the Premier Letter](#), the United Nations [Inclusive Language Guidelines](#) and with [information released by the Accessibility Directorate](#).

Understanding Disabilities

Types of Disabilities

Pain-related	<p>According to the Canadian Survey on Disability this is the most common type of disability for Canadians. This disability is most common among seniors, and more likely to occur in women (16.6% of women with a disability stated it was pain related) compared to men (12.4% of men with a disability stated it was pain related).⁵</p> <p>This type of disability commonly occurs with other disabilities and may refer to long-term or complex pain.</p>
Flexibility, Mobility and Dexterity	<p>This type of physical impairment is significantly more common for those aged 65 years and over.⁵ It can present in many ways, impacting an individual's physical flexibility, mobility, or dexterity.</p>
Mental health-related	<p>A mental health-related disability impacts the brain and the way a person thinks, feels, and acts. Three out of five youth with disabilities have a mental health related disability.⁵</p>
Seeing	<p>A disability resulting in a sensory impairment which can range from partial to complete vision loss.</p>

Hearing	A disability resulting in a sensory impairment which can range from partial to complete hearing loss.
Learning and Memory	Learning or memory disabilities include impairments related to reading, writing or problem solving. They can also impact long and short-term memory, ability to reason or organize, and attention span.
Developmental	Developmental disabilities impair an individual's physical or mental development.
Other	There are many other disabilities which impact an individual's ability to participate fully and equally in society.

Types of Barriers

Persons with disabilities face six general barriers:

1. Attitudinal barriers

When people think and act based on false ideas, leading to discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Example: Making decisions about persons with disabilities without including them. Not believing that a person with a disability can contribute to a project.

2. Informational or communication barriers

When communication methods do not reach persons with disabilities because they can't access them or understand them.

Examples: Using small print or not providing large-print versions of materials. Videos, events, or meetings that don't have closed captions.

3. Technological barriers

When technology can't be accessed by persons with disabilities.

Examples: Websites, documents, or databases that aren't accessible for screen readers. Website images that do not have text to explain them.

4. Physical or architectural barriers

When physical obstacles make access for persons with disabilities difficult.

Examples: A washroom with an accessible stall but no automatic door opener.

5. Organizational or systemic barriers

When an organization's policies or procedures aren't inclusive.

Examples: Requiring a driver's license for a job when another form of transportation could be used. Not providing closed captioning for meetings, events, or videos.

6. Sensory barriers

When sensory information such as lights, sounds, or smells prevent participation in the environment.

Examples: Co-workers wearing scented products in the workplace. Use of fluorescent lighting in the workplace.

Through our consultation with employees and the community, we received feedback related to each type of barrier and noted several opportunities for improvement. This information has, and will continue, to inform our action planning particularly as additional input is received. ~~This feedback is available in the appendix of this document.~~

Disabilities in Saanich

In 2017, Statistics Canada completed the [Canadian Survey on Disability](#) which found that one in five (22%) Canadians aged 15 years and over had one or more disabilities.⁵

In 2021, the District of Saanich had 102,535 residents over the age of 15⁶, of which, in using the Statistics Canada Survey on Disability data, we estimate ~22,557 (22%) are currently living with one or more disabilities varying in severity.

Severity

8,400	mild disability
4,493	moderate disability
4,674	severe disability
4,990	very severe disability
22,557	Total based on the global severity class.

Note: Numbers have been rounded to align to total.

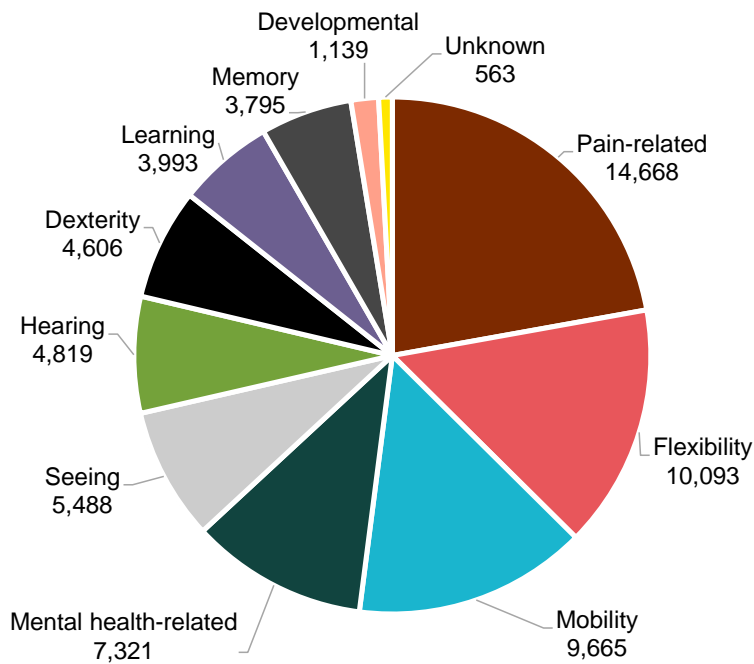


Photo [of a woman and two men](#) by Nathan Anderson from Unsplash

Types

- Pain-related – 14,668
- Flexibility – 10,093
- Mobility – 9,665
- Mental health-related – 7,321
- Seeing – 5,488
- Hearing – 4,819
- Dexterity – 4,606
- Learning – 3,993
- Memory – 3,795
- Developmental – 1,139
- Unknown – 563

A pie chart showing the types of disabilities:



Statistics Canada found Canadian residents living with one or more disabilities face many barriers. Furthermore, between the ages of 25 to 64:

- Persons with disabilities were less likely to be employed (59%) than those without disabilities (80%).⁵
- Those with mild disabilities had higher rates of employment (76%) than those with very severe disabilities (31%).⁵
- Among the persons with disabilities who were not employed or in school, two in five (39%) had the potential to work.⁵

Persons with disabilities were identified as more likely to be living in poverty, and the likelihood increased as the severity of their disability increased.

Framework Guiding Our Work

The framework for this plan was created with the following legislation in mind:

The B.C. Human Rights Code

This important piece of legislation promotes the rights of persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, so they will have full and free participation in all aspects of life. It sets the stage for further legislation to create more accessible and inclusive spaces.

The Accessible Canada Act

In 2019, the Accessible Canada Act was introduced with the aim of creating an accessible Canada by 2040. It follows the principle of “nothing about us without us”, which promotes including persons with disabilities in all aspects of planning for change.

The Accessible British Columbia Act

The Accessible B.C. Act came into law in June 2021. It legislates that all public sector organizations create an accessibility committee, an Accessibility Plan, and a feedback mechanism to help limit barriers to accessibility and inclusion. The Act was created based on the following principles that were also considered when creating this plan:

- Inclusion
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Self-determination (Independence)
- Universal design

Accessibility Standards

The Accessible Canada Act outlines several accessibility standards. Following this legislation, the B.C. Government will develop similar standards and regulations that relate to employment; delivery of services; the built environment; information and communications; transportation; health; education; and procurement. These standards were considered when identifying barriers for this plan.



Photo [of a man using a wheelchair on a running track](#) by Arisa Chattasa from Unsplash

About the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

Purpose

The District of Saanich created the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (ADEI) Council Committee in February 2023, with the purpose of:

- Advising Saanich Council and staff on:
 - matters relating to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that staff and community members experience or may experience in the course of interacting with the municipality, and
 - matters that promote diversity, equity and inclusion within existing and proposed District plans, policies, bylaws and services to ensure the fostering of a welcome and inclusive municipality.
- Reviewing the development of Terms of Reference and subsequent draft organizational accessibility plan and making recommendations in support of the creation of a mechanism for the municipality to receive public feedback on accessibility in accordance with the Accessible British Columbia Act.
- Making recommendations to Council that support the implementation of the Saanich Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy and Accessibility Plan.
- Promoting effective methods of communication and outreach to the broader community on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility matters.
- Inviting community groups to present and discuss at committee meetings and encourage groups to engage with the municipality in its ongoing planning process to allow the District to achieve a greater understanding of the strengths and needs of residents of diverse backgrounds and abilities.

- Providing an opportunity for community groups to present information on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility through delegations.

Membership

The committee consists of 11 members and is made up of a diverse group of individuals including (to the extent possible):

- a member of Council to serve as Chair, appointed by the Mayor;
- at least half of the members are persons with disabilities or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support persons with disabilities;
- at least one member identifies as an Indigenous person; and
- persons from diverse cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientation or gender identity or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, such persons.

The committee also includes a primary staff contact and professional support as required from other departments as well as a member of the Police Department.

The committee considers both internal and external factors that contribute to the broader effort of making Saanich more accessible and inclusive. It advises Saanich Council and staff on improvements that could be made, and it makes recommendations that support the implementation of the Saanich Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy.

The ADEI committee ensures that the requirements of the Accessible B.C. Act are met and contribute to the ongoing development of the Accessibility Plan as it evolves over time.

About the Accessibility Plan

Purpose

The District of Saanich's Accessibility Plan outlines how the district will continue its efforts to improve accessibility awareness and the accessibility of our facilities, programs, services, communications and employment opportunities from 2023 – 2026. ~~Further consultation with the public in the fall will inform this plan prior to Council's approval and the publication of the final document.~~

The plan builds on our current accessibility achievements to date and has been created to meet the legislated requirements of the Accessible B.C. Act that came into effect in June 2021. This ~~first draft of the~~ plan has been created based on consultation and feedback from the District of Saanich Accessibility, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, ~~and~~ members of the community, and employees ~~various departments within the District of Saanich.~~ District of Saanich staff.

Our Commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion

The District of Saanich strives to create an inclusive and welcoming culture, where people of all ages and abilities feel included and can equally access the facilities, services, programs and information. In our daily work, we endeavour to apply an accessibility lens to all aspects of what we do. To support this, the District of Saanich is partnering with the Saanich Police Department to enhance accessibility and reduce barriers.

Principles

'Nothing About Us Without Us'

It is the lived experience of persons with disabilities that makes them experts on creating accessible and inclusive spaces. Change ~~should~~can only occur when the voices of the people affected are included and heard.

Universal Design

It is important to plan for the different needs and variability of uses and people. Whenever possible, the creation of accessible spaces should not be reactionary; but rather proactive and thoughtful, with the needs of everyone in mind.

Equity

Access to facilities, programs, services, and opportunities should be the same for everyone. The District of Saanich is committed to removing barriers so that equity occurs.

~~occurs.~~

Consultation

A staff Accessibility Committee was formed to identify accessibility barriers within the District of Saanich. Interviews with representatives from all departments, including Saanich Police, were conducted in May and June 2023. The Council Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee and Human Resources department were asked to identify barriers. The focus and categorization of this feedback was based on the accessibility barriers that are identified in the Accessible B.C. Act, including barriers to environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, and technologies. The accessibility standards outlined in the Accessible Canada Act were also considered.

In the fall of 2023, a second round of consultation and engagement was conducted inviting feedback from residents and visitors to the District of Saanich~~within the District of Saanich community will occur. This included three focus groups (two virtual, one in person), as well as an email and phone number to which individuals could directly contact with feedback. We received extensive feedback which was incorporated into the plan or, when the feedback related to existing actions, shared the feedback to support the departments with initiatives underway. This will include a public survey and focus groups to secure feedback including from persons with disabilities, those supporting persons with disabilities, and representatives from disability-serving organization~~s~~organizations.~~ For a detailed list of those who supported the development of this plan see Appendix 2.

~~The information gathered from these processes will be added to this document and updated regularly as we grow and learn. To provide feedback refer to the feedback section of this document on page 23.~~

Priorities

The District of Saanich has already made some great steps towards greater accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities. Some of Saanich's achievements to date include:

- Rick Hansen Foundation Built Environment Evaluation.
- Website has options for colour contrast, print size, & language choice.
- Signage is being changed to include symbols and large print.
- Staff in Parks, Recreation and Community Services have received intensive training supporting working with children with disabilities, and through partnership with Island Health provide one-on-one inclusion support for day camps when possible.
- Some accessibility improvements are already being made to washrooms, elevator lifts, and accessible pathways.

- Employment practices are being reviewed for accessibility & inclusion.
- Capital Daily survey ranks Saanich council meetings as the most accessible.
- Developed and implemented a work-from-home policy.

~~See Appendix 3 for detailed feedback.~~

Field Code Changed

Through consultation with the District of Saanich staff, the Saanich Police Department and the Council Advisory Committee, we heard feedback on areas of opportunity related to all barriers and identified several priorities for improvement. These priorities will be the focus for the initial stages of our Accessibility Plan, with further priorities being highlighted after consultation with the Saanich community. The three priority areas include:

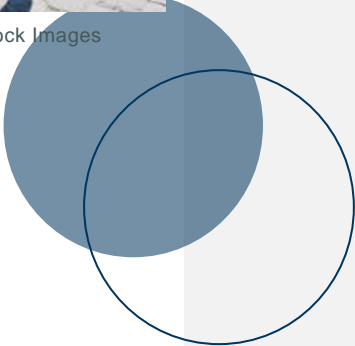
- Priority One: Awareness and Training
- Priority Two: Built Environment Improvements
- Priority Three: Increase Access

~~See Appendix 3 for detailed feedback.~~

Field Code Changed



Photo [of a person in a wheelchair at the foot of a staircase](#) by Romaset from iStock Images



Priority 1: Awareness and Training

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
1.1 Ensure information relative to accessibility is available to the public and employees.	1.1.1 Hire the staff position Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Consultant, to lead staff facing initiatives.	Recruiting 2023 2023: <u>Complete</u>
	1.1.2 Create an 'accessibility hub' on the District of Saanich Website.	Beginning 2024
1.2 Promote inclusive behaviors and support employee knowledge and awareness of: the needs of people with various disabilities. accessibility barriers and strategies.	1.2.1 Provide training to new and existing employees on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why accessibility & inclusion matters; • accessibility legislation; • types of disabilities, invisible disabilities, and intersectionality; • barriers to accessibility & inclusion: attitudinal, physical/environmental, communication, technological, systemic and sensory; • strategies for minimizing barriers to accessibility and inclusion; and • inclusive language and creating a sense of belonging. 	Beginning 2024 Funding dependent*

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Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	1.2.2 Provide workshops to accompany the standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets that will be produced.	Beginning 2024
	1.2.3 Provide training in disability awareness as it relates to emergency preparedness.	Beginning 2025 Funding dependant*
	1.2.4 Provide accessibility communications training to ensure documents meet PDF/UA requirements.	Beginning 2025
	1.2.5 Create an effective model for staff training to support persons with disabilities that are in Saanich Parks, Recreation and Community Services programs.	Completed. Training is ongoing. <u>Funding dependant*</u>
	1.2.6 Continue to provide psychological health and safety training. Since 2021, over 300 employees have attended at least one course on this topic.	Ongoing Funded
1.3 Promote inclusion and collect data to support decision making.	1.3.1 Create a photo library with inclusive images for communications materials.	Beginning 2024 Funding dependant*

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Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	1.3.2 Collect diversity data	Subject to funding for HR systems.*
	<u>1.3.3 Create connections with other municipalities to foster sharing of accessibility achievements, opportunities for improvement and knowledge.</u>	<u>2024Ongoing</u>

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Priority 2: Built Environment Improvements

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
2.1 Improve the physical accessibility in Saanich facilities to ensure persons with disabilities can access services and gain employment with the District of Saanich.	<p>2.1.1 Incorporate some of the recommendations made in our recent physical accessibility review.</p> <p>Thirteen facilities within District of Saanich are currently being assessed for possible accessibility improvements.</p> <p>Some adaptations have already been made, including accessibility improvements to some washrooms, elevator lifts, sound barriers, and pathways.</p>	Ongoing Initiatives may be funding dependant*

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	2.1.2 Continue to action accessibility initiatives through the active transportation plan.	Ongoing Funded
	2.1.3 Continue the recreation centre wayfinding and signage multi-year project.	Ongoing Funded
	2.1.4 Continue to increase accessibility in District parks and playgrounds.	Ongoing Funding dependant*
	2.1.5 Continue to strive for increased accessibility in all public meetings. The Capital Daily survey ranks Saanich council meetings as the most accessible in our area.	Ongoing
	2.1.6 Continue to provide various methods for people to pay for various programs and services throughout the District of Saanich (for example property taxes can be paid online, in person with a cashier or via a drop box at the hall).	Ongoing
	2.1.7 Work collaboratively with BC Transit and other partners to ensure feedback on bus stop accessibility is relayed to relevant parties.	Begin 2024

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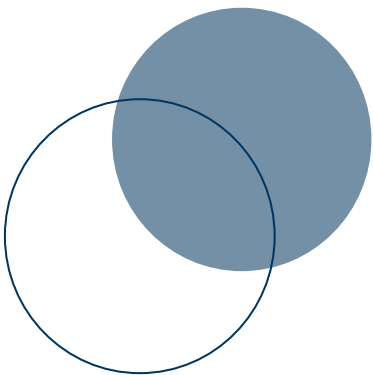
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Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	<u>2.1.8 Review accessible parking stalls within the District based on current accessibility needs of the community.</u>	<u>20254 (?)</u> <u>Funding dependant*</u>

*Funding to support many of the action items would need to be brought forward as part of the annual budget process before actioning.

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Priority 3: Increasing Access

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
3.1 Create policies, procedures and tools to support inclusivity, accessibility, and safety.	3.1.1 Create an Accessibility Policy.	2024 3
	3.1.2 Produce standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets for employees.	2025
	3.1.3 Develop a catalogue of <u>existing and newly procured</u> assistive devices and accommodations for employees.	Ongoing
	3.1.4 Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform the procurement of goods, services, and facilities.	2025 Unfunded
	3.1.5 Continue to apply Adaptable Housing guidelines to planning applications. Ensure all building permit requests meet the BC Building Code requirements.	Ongoing
	3.1.6 Review emergency planning procedures and equipment to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities have been considered.	2024 May require funding

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Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	3.1.7 Draft a formal guide to personal injury and illnesses, including accommodation and return to work.	Ongoing
	<u>3.1.8 Create an equity review guide to support application across corporate decision making.</u>	<u>2025</u>
	3.1.9 Review the existing financial supports the District of Saanich available offers to assess offers opportunities for improvement, and ensure individuals with a disability have been considered.	20254 (?)
3.2 Receive feedback from the Saanich community and staff on accessibility barriers and achievements.	3.2.1 Create a feedback mechanism to support public and staff input related to accessibility.	2023 <u>2023:</u> <u>FundedComplete</u>
	3.2.2 Procure accessible engagement software.	2023 Funded
	3.2.3 Create a survey and conduct focus groups to further identify accessibility barriers and achievements in Saanich.	2024 Funded

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Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	3.2.4 Continue to promote the staff Accessibility DEI committee to ensure representation and increased feedback from employees with disabilities.	Ongoing
3.3 Ensure communications materials <u>and systems</u> are accessible.	3.3.1 Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform communications materials (documents, videos, emails, and social media).	2024
	3.3.2 Continue to write documents in plain language and ensure <u>video recordings of Council meetings</u> are provided.	Ongoing
	3.3.3 Update the District's website (saanich.ca) to include more accessibility features (it currently has options for colour contrast, print size, and language choice).	Ongoing
	<u>3.3.4 Complete a review of the recreation registration systems for accessibility.</u>	<u>2025 (?)</u> <u>May require funding</u> <u>Funding dependant</u>
	<u>3.3.5 Complete a review of the recreation centre accessibility online information using feedback from individuals with disabilities.</u>	<u>20254 (?)</u> <u>May require funding</u> <u>Funding dependant</u>

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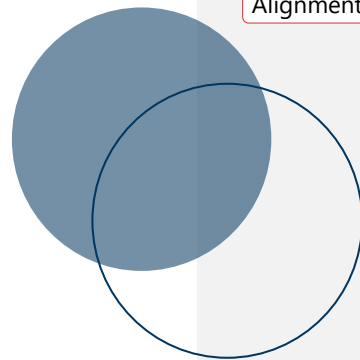
Objectives	Actions	Timeline
3.4 Ensure recruitment standards are accessible and inclusive.	3.4.1 Create a process for applicants requiring accommodations during the recruitment cycle.	2023: Complete
	3.4.2 Review employment practices for accessibility & inclusion.	Ongoing
	3.4.3 Ensure all job postings include information about accommodations and remove unnecessary position requirements.	Ongoing

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*Funding to support many of the action items would need to be brought forward as part of the annual budget process before actioning.

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Feedback

Your voice is important to us! We invite you to share ongoing feedback on this plan and on any barriers to accessibility and inclusion that you, or someone you know, has experienced in the District of Saanich.

To give your input, contact our human resources department at 250 475-1775 or via email at AccessibilityFeedback@Saanich.ca. If you have feedback specific to programs or services provided by the Saanich Police Department, please provide your feedback directly to Accessibility@SaanichPolice.ca.

Monitoring & Evaluation

~~The information outlined in this plan will be reviewed in the fall of 2023 and updated to include the voices of the external Saanich community.~~

The District of Saanich Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and evaluated every three years, with the first full evaluation of this plan beginning September 2026.

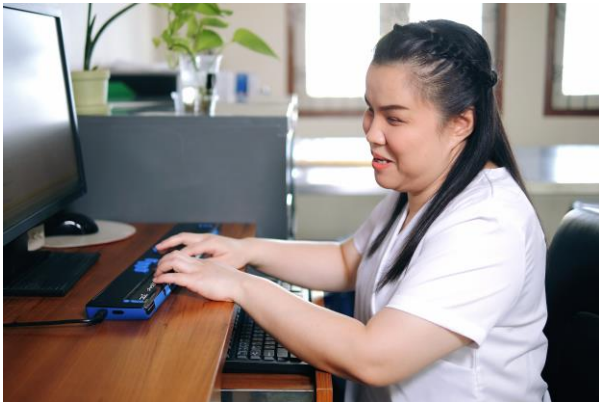
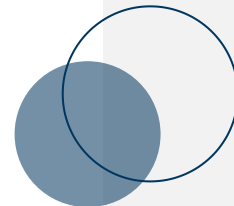


Photo of a woman using a computer by Chansom Pantip from iStock images



Appendix 1: References

¹ Government of B.C., “British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation”, 2022, <https://www.aodaalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/B.C.-Framework-for-Accessibility-Legislation.pdf>

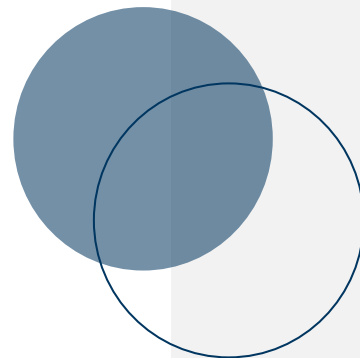
² Government of B.C., “Managing Employee Accommodation in the Workplace”, modified 2019-04-23, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/managers-supervisors/employee-labour-relations/managing-accommodation>

³ Accessible British Columbia Act, 2021, <https://www.B.C.laws.gov.B.C..ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019>

⁴ Inclusion B.C., 2023, <https://inclusionB.C..org/>

⁵ Statistics Canada, “A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017”, 2018, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2018002-eng.htm>

⁶ Statistics Canada, “Census Profile”, 2023, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

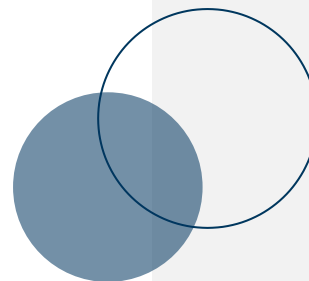


Appendix 2: Contributions

Many different people contributed their thoughts and suggestions to this document.

Thank you to the following groups and people:

- All members of the public who emailed, phoned or provided feedback in person
- Councillor Mena Westhaver, ADEI Committee Chair
- Community members of the ADEI Committee
- Saanich Leadership Team
- Director of Corporate Services
- Deputy Chief Constable, Police
- Deputy Manager, Legislative Services
- Senior Manager, Transportation & Development
- Manager, Human Resources
- Senior Manager, Community Services
- Manager, Engineering Services
- Manager of Development, Engineering Services
- Manager, Sustainability
- Manager, Information & Technology
- Manager, Purchasing Services
- Manager, Inspection Services
- Manager, Housing Division in Community Planning
- Supervisor, Planning Administration
- Human Resources Advisor
- Transportation Planner
- Communications Team
- Occupational Health & Safety Specialist



Appendix 3: Initial Feedback Received

Built Environment

Our goal is to ensure that everyone, including those with disabilities, can access all District of Saanich buildings and grounds.

Below are some improvements that were identified in consultation with the District of Saanich employees:

- Some people find access to the Municipal Hall difficult to navigate when entering, and the front counter service may not be as accessible as it could be.
- The Council Chambers room may not be as accessible it could be. Considerations could include (but not limited to) acquiring an adjustable furniture and resolving sound issues.
- Braille signage has not been included and some signage may not have symbols or be high contrast. Accessibility should be considered over aesthetics of signage.
- Several aspects of the built environment were mentioned as inaccessible and in need of consideration for updates/revisions — washrooms, elevators, stairs, narrow pathways/aisles, automation/heaviness of doors, curvy ramp, changerooms, non-adjustable counters, non-adjustable furniture, and background noise (need sound-absorbing strategies).
- No formal feedback mechanism is in place for reporting environmental accessibility issues.
- Emergency planning (and emergency equipment) should consider people with various disabilities.
- Some aspects of some buildings are not yet accessible enough to recruit people with disabilities to be on staff.
- Some conference rooms may be noisy and lack sound-dampening strategies.
- Plexiglass front counter areas may make it difficult for some to hear.

~~Information and Communication~~

~~The information and communication theme involves improving access to in-person and online communication, digital information, and print information.~~

~~Below are some aspects related to information and communication that could be improved that were identified in consultation with the District of Saanich employees.~~

- ~~• Public material could include more access to alternate formats that support people with all types of disabilities.~~
- ~~• District of Saanich maps are currently not accessible to everyone.~~
- ~~• Staff may not be aware of requirements for accessible documents: large print, colour contrast, dyslexia-friendly font, etc.~~
- ~~• Most staff lack training on guidelines for accessible documents, accessible social media, and accessible online materials.~~
- ~~• There is no formal feedback mechanism for documents, the website, or other communication barriers.~~
- ~~• Standard accessibility guidelines for social media posts and website entries could be created.~~

~~Technology~~

~~This theme includes assessing technological tools, hardware, software, and the District of Saanich website.~~

~~Below are some technological considerations that could be improved as identified in consultation with the District of Saanich employees.~~

- ~~• It would be useful to involve people with disabilities in accessibility testing of all aspects of the Saanich website and other software, including registration forms, navigation of the site, and access to information.~~
- ~~• Most staff lack training and knowledge of accessibility checkers.~~
- ~~• More attention could be given to providing closed captions in videos and online meetings.~~
- ~~• There is currently no formal process in place for accessing ASL, language interpreters, etc.~~

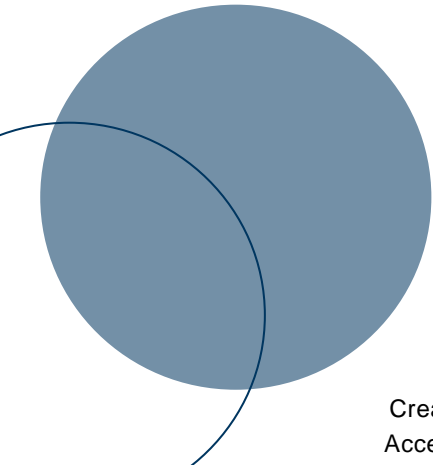
- ~~There is no accessibility expert in the Information & Technology Department.~~
- ~~There is a lack of a formal feedback mechanism to report technological accessibility issues.~~

~~Policies & Practices~~

~~It is important to assess the procedures and policies that an institution has, considering whether any need to be revised or created to ensure greater equality and fairness to people with disabilities.~~

~~Below are some aspects related to policies and practices that could be improved as identified in consultation with the District of Saanich employees.~~

- ~~It would be beneficial to have more staff training on customer service tips for people with disabilities, inclusive language, and unconscious bias as it relates to people with disabilities.~~
- ~~Employee accommodation processes, return-to-work processes, and inclusive hiring processes could be improved.~~
- ~~It would be beneficial to have a process/committee in place for employees with disabilities to connect and discuss accessibility issues.~~
- ~~A formal accessibility policy could be created, and it would be beneficial to continue to regularly update other policies with accessibility principles in mind.~~
- ~~Although sometimes done informally, there are currently no standardized procurement policies that include accessibility for procuring goods, facilities, and services.~~
- ~~More attention could be given to including accommodation options in public invitations for online or in-person meetings.~~
- ~~Emergency procedures may need to be reviewed to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities have been addressed.~~
- ~~Public information about accessibility in Saanich could be improved.~~
- ~~More representation of people with disabilities in District of Saanich employment and in promotional material would help to normalize having a disability.~~



Created in partnership with Melissa Lyon,
Accessibility & Inclusion Matter Consulting



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