

AGENDA
Accessibility, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee
To be held in Committee Rm. 2 and via MS Teams,
Saanich Municipal Hall, 770 Vernon Avenue,
Wednesday, September 6, 2023, at 5:00 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)**
 - May 31, 2023

- 2. CHAIR'S REMARKS**

- 3. OVERVIEW OF THE DRAFT ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**
 - Melissa Lyon

- 4. FLOATING BUS STOPS**
 - Reed Poynter

* Adjournment *

Next Meeting: October 4, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

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, Victoria B.C.
May 31, 2023, at 5:01 pm

Present: Councillor Mena Westhaver (via Teams), Maya Bosdet (via Teams), Rae Franklin, Tracy Grimsrud, Stephan Herman, Kam Judge (5:13 p.m.), Laurie-Anne Keith, Donald Kennedy, Rachid Ouache (via Teams), Reed Poynter.

Staff: Sheila Allen, Director, Corporate Services; Troy McKay, Senior Manager of Transportation & Development Services (6:28 p.m.); Samuel Dubois, Human Resources Manager; Megan Squires, Senior Transportation Planner (6:20 p.m.); Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Swapna Mazumber

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED by S. Herman and Seconded by T. Grimsrud: “That the Minutes of the Accessibility, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Committee meeting dated May 3, 2023, be adopted.”

CARRIED

CHAIR’S REMARKS

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

- The excitement and energy were noticeable at the May 3, 2023, meeting.
- The desire from the committee is to see the District of Saanich become a more inclusive and accessible place to live and work.

STRATEGIC OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

The Chair encouraged members to review the memo, which was attached to the agenda and to contact the Planning Department with any questions or concerns.

DISABILITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STRATEGY PRESENTATION

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

- The goal for the session is to increase the knowledge of disability awareness and to provide an overview of the *Accessible British Columbia Act (2021)* and the requirements for the District of Saanich.
- In British Columbia (B.C.) 20.5% of adults have a disability and their employment rate is noticeably lower than the general population.

- More than a ¼ of workplace discrimination and harassment reports are made from people with disabilities.
- On September 1, 2023, Saanich is required to have a plan posted publicly, with a tool to receive feedback, and be updated every 3 years.
- The guiding principles in the Act that will be implemented in the written plan for Saanich are inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, universal design.
- The legislation requires that accessibility committees, to the extent possible, have at least half of its members be persons with disabilities or represent a disability-serving organization, represent the diversity of British Columbians, and have Indigenous representation.
- Of the standards that are listed to be implemented, employment, serviced delivery and the built environment are of focus at this time.
- 1 in 5 Canadians have one or more disabilities according to the Canadian Survey on Disability (2017).
- Disabilities can fluctuate between invisible, permanent, and temporary.
- Intersectionality must be addressed to create a truly inclusive society.
- There is a shift in the way society views disabilities.
- People with disabilities deserve equal rights and responsibilities to contribute to society.
- Poor lighting, inaccessible parking and emergency equipment are examples of physical and environmental barriers.

MOVED by S. Herman and Seconded by L. Keith: “That the meeting recess for seven minutes for smaller working group discussions.”

CARRIED

The meeting recessed at 5:47 p.m. and resumed at 5:54 p.m.

- Some communication and information barriers are: inaccessible job advertisements, videos that are not captioned and the use of high-level language.
- Large print or Braille, short sentences, and plain language, are some alternate formats that will help to limit communication and information barriers.

MOVED by S. Herman and Seconded by T. Grimsrud: “That the meeting recess for seven minutes for smaller working group discussions.”

CARRIED

The meeting recessed at 6:10 p.m. and resumed at 6:17 p.m.

- Using accessibility checkers and assistive technology will ensure that all forms of communication is accessible.

MOVED by S. Herman and Seconded by D. Kennedy: “That the meeting recess for seven minutes for smaller working group discussions.”

CARRIED

The meeting recessed at 6:20 p.m. and resumed at 6:27 p.m.

- The District of Saanich strives to model inclusivity.
- Person-centric language is an inclusive way to address someone.

MOVED by L. Keith and Seconded by K. Judge: “That the meeting recess for seven minutes for smaller working group discussions.”

CARRIED

The meeting recessed at 6:41 p.m. and resumed at 6:48 p.m.

- The disability icon will be changed to an active accessibility icon.
- Inclusive language and unconscious bias training would be useful tools for Saanich employees.
- Input from the public and disability serving organizations is planned for the fall.

MOVED by S. Herman and Seconded by T. Grimsrud: “That the meeting recess for three minutes for smaller working group discussions.”

CARRIED

The meeting recessed at 6:50 p.m. and resumed at 6:53 p.m.

- A draft plan will be available in September for the committee members to review.
- Interviews with Department Representatives outlines steps that have already been achieved to limit or remove barriers.
- A commitment statement will be added to the Accessibility Plan and posted on the Saanich website.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

The Senior Transportation Planner gave an overview of the Active Transportation Plan, and the following was noted:

- The Active Transportation Plan (ATP) has not been updated since its adoption in 2018. It is a guide for active transportation network improvements over a 30-year period.
- The District of Saanich is committed to monitoring and updating the ATP so that it is relevant and actionable for the next 5 years.
- The committee will offer feedback on the accessibility and equity portion of the plan.

Beth Hurford, Transportation Consultant, gave a presentation (PowerPoint on file), and the following was noted:

- A survey is available online for feedback.
- The update process is in phase 4, “Draft Plan and Update Review”. The final ATP is projected to be considered for adoption in the fall of 2023.
- Demographic and travel data has been gathered from the 2021 Census.
- The ATP runs parallel with the Road Safety Action Plan (RSAP).
- Opportunities and desires for an equitable transportation system were not included in the 2018 ATP.
- The ATP vision update is to see a universally accessible community that is safe for all people. A shift to sustainable transportation will enhance well-being and climate goals.
- The goals for the 2023 update are to:
 - Support sustainable transportation
 - Shift active modes of transportation to reduce vehicle trips
 - Eliminate all fatalities and injuries on Saanich roads and trails
 - Create more connections for active living
 - Build a network that is accessible and provides equitable mobility options
- Equity deserving areas are loosely identified through the 2021 census data and an equity analysis conducted by Saanich.
- Various engagement activities such as open houses, pop ups and promotions are happening throughout the District.

The committee made the following comments:

- Differentiating between the words “convenient” and “accessible” will help to clarify the vision.
- Accessibility guidance for building infrastructure has been provided by Provincial engagement strategies, the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) and local community engagements.
- “Walking, rolling and cycling” and “travelling with the use of a mobility device” has been

- added for a more inclusive language.
- 65-70% of the streetlights in Saanich have been changed to LED lighting to provide more access to low lit areas.
- A free youth pass for B.C. Transit is needed.
- All the trails that are identified in the plan are hard surfaced.

*** Laurie-Anne Keith exited the meeting at 7:07 p.m.***

The Chair thanked staff for the presentations and asked for any final comments and the following was noted:

- Members felt included watching and listening from home on Teams.

T. McKay, M. Squires, and B. Hurford exited the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 6, 2023.

Councillor Westhaver, Chair

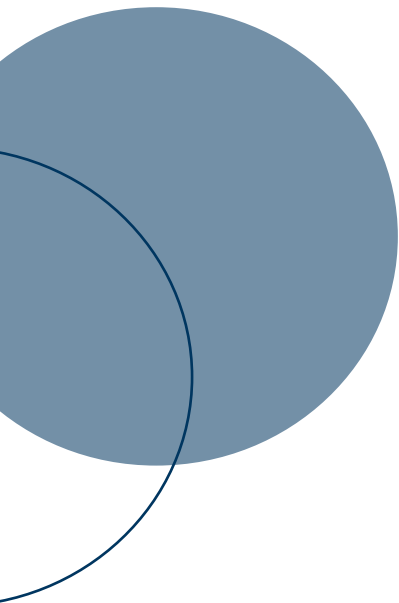
I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk



District of Saanich Accessibility Plan 2023 – 2026

DRAFT: Aug. 29, 2023

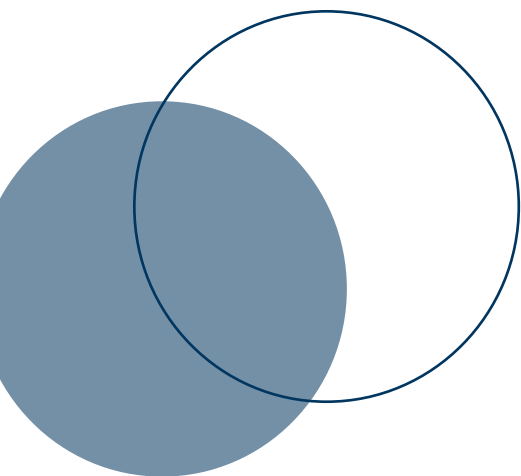


Territorial Acknowledgement

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 W̱SÁNEĆ peoples represented by the W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), S̱ÁUTW̱ (Tsawout), W̱SIKEM (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.

Photos within this document have been secured from Unsplash & [iStock Images](#) and they are copyright free.

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.

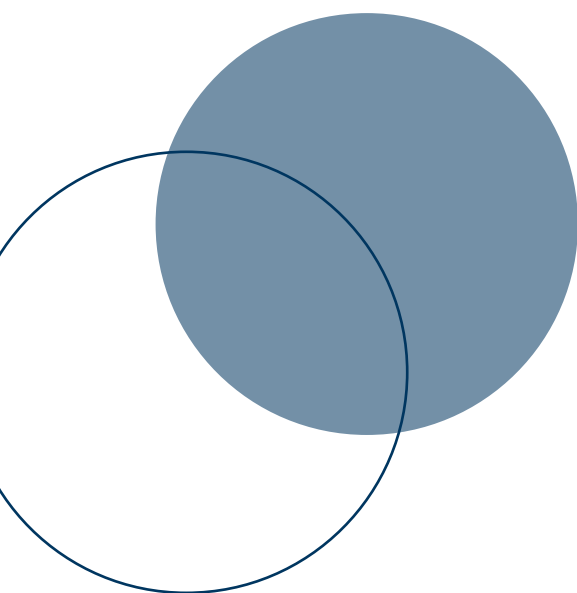


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Introduction

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 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, 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.

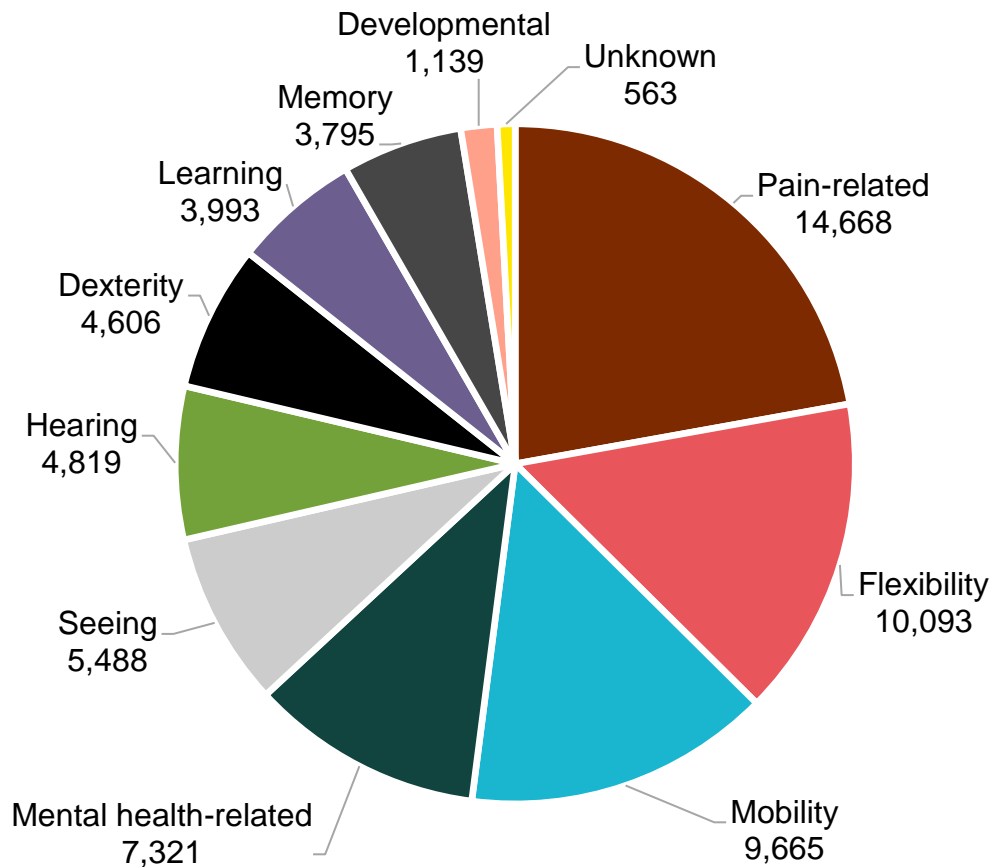


Photo by Nathan Anderson from Unsplash

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 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 from the District of Saanich Accessibility, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, and members of various departments within the District of Saanich.

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 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.

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 within the District of Saanich community will occur. 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 organizations.

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.

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



Photo by Romaset from iStock Images

Priority 1: Awareness and Training

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
<p>1.1 Ensure information relative to accessibility is available to the public and employees.</p>	<p>1.1.1 Hire the staff position Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Consultant, to lead staff facing initiatives.</p>	<p>Recruiting 2023</p>
	<p>1.1.2 Create an ‘accessibility hub’ on the District of Saanich Website.</p>	<p>Beginning 2024</p>
<p>1.2 Promote inclusive behaviors and support employee knowledge and awareness of: the needs of people with various disabilities. accessibility barriers and strategies.</p>	<p>1.2.1 Provide training to new and existing employees on the following topics:</p> <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. 	<p>Beginning 2024</p> <p>Funding dependent</p>

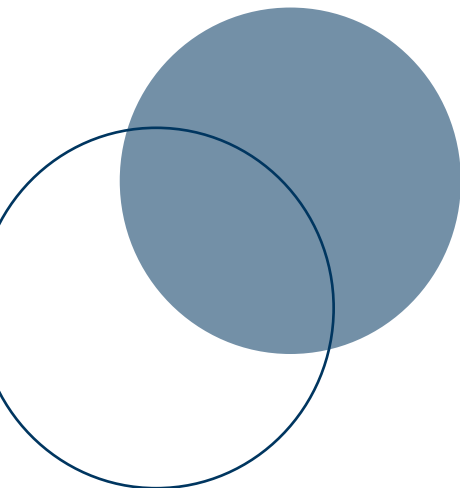
Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	1.2.2 Provide workshops to accompany the standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets that will be produced.	Beginning 2024
	1.2.3 Provide training in disability awareness as it relates to emergency preparedness.	Beginning 2025 Funding dependant
	1.2.4 Provide accessibility 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.
	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

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	1.3.2 Collect diversity data	Subject to funding for HR systems.

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.	2.1.1 Incorporate some of the recommendations made in our recent physical accessibility review. Thirteen facilities within District of Saanich are currently being assessed for possible accessibility improvements. Some adaptations have already been made, including accessibility improvements to some washrooms, elevator lifts, sound barriers, and pathways.	Ongoing Initiatives may be funding dependant
	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

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	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.	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

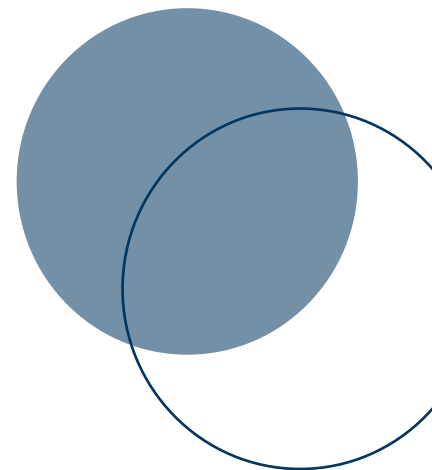


Priority 3: Increasing Access

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
<p>3.1 Create policies, procedures and tools to support inclusivity, accessibility, and safety.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Create an Accessibility Policy.</p>	<p>2023</p>
	<p>3.1.2 Produce standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets for employees.</p>	<p>2025</p>
	<p>3.1.3 Develop a catalogue of assistive devices and accommodations for employees.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>3.1.4 Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform the procurement of goods, services, and facilities.</p>	<p>2025 Unfunded</p>
	<p>3.1.5 Continue to apply Adaptable Housing guidelines to planning applications.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>3.1.6 Review emergency planning procedures and equipment to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities have been considered.</p>	<p>2024 May require funding</p>
	<p>3.1.7 Draft a formal guide to personal injury and illnesses, including accommodation and return to work.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
<p>3.2 Receive feedback from the Saanich community and staff on accessibility barriers and achievements.</p>	<p>3.2.1 Create a feedback mechanism to support public and staff input related to accessibility.</p>	<p>2023 Funded</p>
	<p>3.2.2 Procure accessible engagement software.</p>	<p>2023 Funded</p>
	<p>3.2.3 Create a survey and conduct focus groups to further identify accessibility barriers and achievements in Saanich.</p>	<p>2024 Funded</p>
	<p>3.2.4 Continue to promote the staff Accessibility DEI committee to ensure representation and increased feedback from employees with disabilities.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>3.3 Ensure communications materials are accessible.</p>	<p>3.3.1 Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform communications materials (documents, videos, emails, and social media).</p>	<p>2024</p>
	<p>3.3.2 Continue to write documents in plain language and ensure video recordings of Council meetings are provided.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Objectives	Actions	Timeline
	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
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



Feedback

Your voice is important to us! We invite you to share 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.

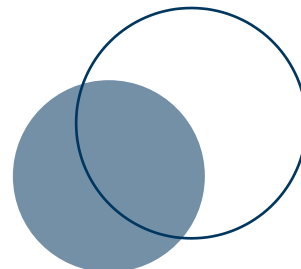
To give your input, contact our human resources department at 250 475-1775 or via email at AccessibilityFeedback@Saanich.ca. If you have feedback specific to programs or services provided by the Saanich Police Department, please provide your feedback directly to Accessibility@SaanichPolice.ca.

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 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>

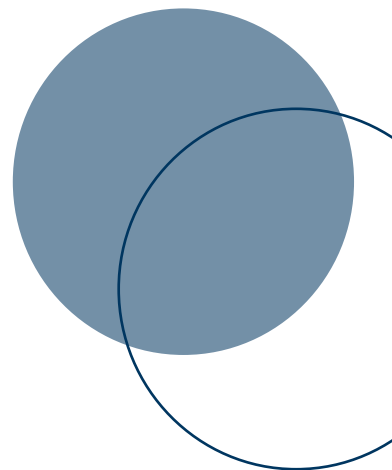
² Government of B.C., “Managing Employee Accommodation in the Workplace”, modified 2019-04-23, <https://www2.gov.B.C..ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/managers-supervisors/employee-labour-relations/managing-accommodation>

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>

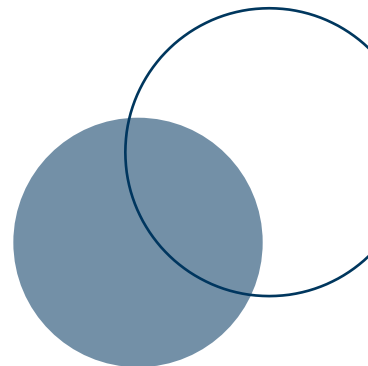


Appendix 2: Contributions

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

Thank you to the following groups and people:

- 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.

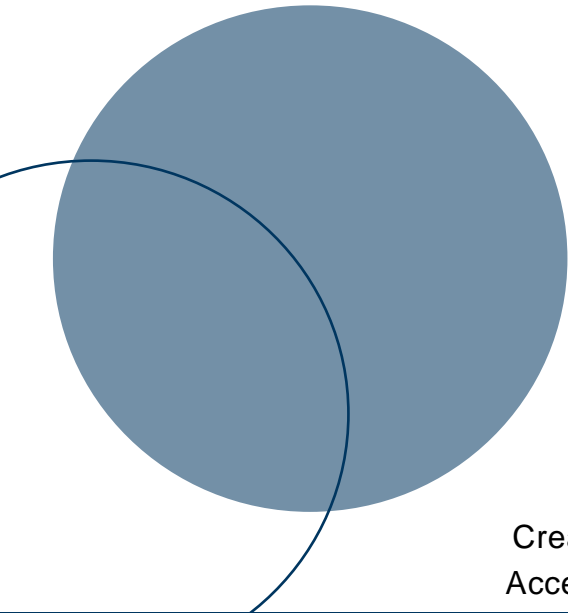
- There is no accessibility expert in the Information & Technology Department.
- There is a lack of a formal feedback mechanism to report technological accessibility issues.

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



Overview of the Draft Accessibility Plan

District of Saanich



Presented by Melissa Lyon, M.Ed., B.Ed.
m.lyon@telus.net



Territorial Acknowledgement



Session Goals

- Provide information about the Draft Accessibility Plan
- Introduce the Accessibility Feedback Mechanism
- Answer questions & receive feedback

Background Information

BC Accessibility Act

The deadline for BC municipalities is September 1, 2023

Requirements:

- Create an Accessibility Committee
- Create an Accessibility Plan
- Create a Feedback Mechanism



Principles of Accessibility

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



Why Plan For Accessibility?

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

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



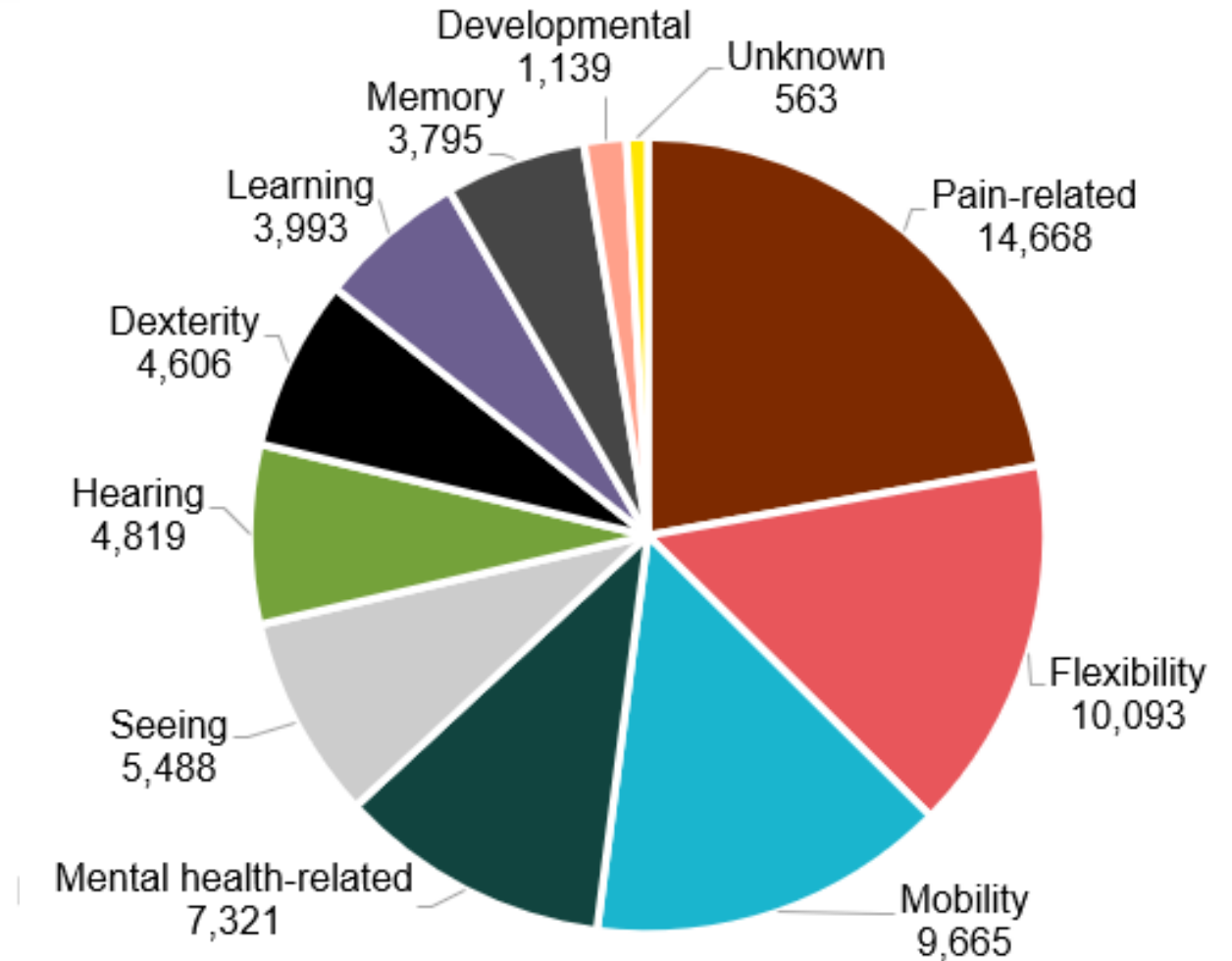
Saanich Disability Statistic Estimations

In the District of Saanich, we estimate that 22,558 (22%) are currently living with one or more disabilities.

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.



Purpose

To increase awareness about accessibility & inclusion

By putting a focus on accessibility and by providing training, we are striving to increase awareness about the needs and strategies for supporting people with disabilities.

To improve accessibility in Saanich

The goal is to provide accessible facilities, programs, services, communications, and employment in all the District of Saanich locations. This includes the removal of existing barriers and the prevention of the creation of new barriers.

To provide ways to give accessibility feedback

Through the feedback mechanism and consultation, Saanich employees and citizens will be given a voice to share accessibility barriers and achievements.

District of Saanich Commitment to Accessibility

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.



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 Saanich can continue to grow and thrive.

Themes Emerging from Consultation

‘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 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.

Saanich Accessibility Achievements

- 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
- Recreation Centre staff have intensive training and have one-on-one inclusion support
- 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
- As an organization, at all levels, we care about our employees, and we adapt to support them

Saanich Accessibility Barriers Identified

- Built Environment & Transportation
- Information & Communication
- Technology
- Policies & Practices
- Sensory Barriers
- Attitudinal Barriers



Priority 1: Awareness & Training

Proposed Actions

- Hire an Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Consultant, to lead staff facing initiatives.
- Create an 'accessibility hub' on the District of Saanich Website.
- Provide training to new and existing employees
- Provide workshops to accompany the standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets that be produced.
- Provide training in disability awareness as it relates to emergency preparedness.
- Provide accessibility communications training & ensure documents meet PDF/UA requirements.
- Continue to provide psychological health and safety training.
- Create a photo library with inclusive images for communications materials & collect diversity data.

Priority 2: Built Environment Improvements

Proposed Actions

- Incorporate some of the recommendations made in our recent physical accessibility review.
- Change signage to include symbols and large print.
- Continue to increase accessibility in District parks and playgrounds.
- Continue to strive for increased accessibility in all public meetings.
- Continue to provide various methods for people to pay their taxes, including a drive-by booth during tax time.
- Work collaboratively with BC Transit and other partners to ensure feedback on bus stop accessibility is relayed to relevant parties.

Priority 3: Increase Access

Proposed Actions - Policies & Procedures

- Create an Accessibility Policy.
- Produce standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets for employees.
- Develop a catalogue of assistive devices and accommodations for employees.
- Develop and implement a work-from-home policy.
- Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform the procurement of goods, services, and facilities.
- Continue to include the voluntary accessibility guidelines in the Adapted Housing Project
- Review emergency planning procedures and equipment to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities have been considered.
- Draft a formal guide to personal injury and illnesses, including accommodation and return to work.

Priority 3: Increase Access

Proposed Actions - Feedback, Communications & Hiring/Recruitment

- Create a feedback mechanism and procure accessible engagement software.
- Create a survey and conduct focus groups to further identify accessibility barriers.
- Continue to promote the ADEI committee to ensure representation & increase feedback.
- Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform communications materials (documents, videos, emails, and social media).
- Continue to write documents in plain language and provide video recordings of Council meetings.
- Update the website to include even more accessibility features.
- Develop a catalogue of assistive devices and accommodations for employees.
- Create a process for applicants requiring accommodations during the recruitment cycle.
- Review employment practices for accessibility & inclusion and ensure all job postings are accessible.

Saanich Feedback Mechanism

Process

To give your input, contact our human resources department at 250-475-1775 or via email at AccessibilityFeedback@Saanich.ca to discuss alternate methods of giving feedback.

If you have feedback specific to programs or services provided by the Saanich Police Department, please provide your feedback directly to Accessibility@SaanichPolice.ca



Next Steps

- Access funding to provide district-wide disability awareness & accessibility training
- Create an Accessibility Policy for Saanich
- Outline priority actions for Built Environment & Transportation improvements
- Continue consultation with employees and invite public consultation on barriers and achievements in Saanich
- Update the Saanich website to include an Accessibility Hub





Melissa Lyon

m.lyon@telus.net

accessibilityandinclusionmatter.com

Thank you

