

City of Pitt Meadows Accessibility Plan 2025

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect and gratitude that the City of Pitt Meadows is located on the traditional, unceded territory of q̓íc'əy' (Katzie) First Nation who were stewards of this land since time immemorial.

The City stands with Indigenous peoples, committed to learning and evolving, as we acknowledge this historical truth and take meaningful steps towards reconciliation.

Appreciation

The City thanks the many people living with disabilities, their family members, friends and caregivers, and staff who shared their experiences and insights to inform development of the Pitt Meadows Accessibility Plan.

The City's Community Support & Accessibility Committee (CSAC) was also consulted as part of the development of the Accessibility Plan.

This report was designed with accessibility in mind. The City uses the Avenir font. We chose 13pt and used black-on-white text except for headings, increased image contrast and included image descriptions.

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Introduction

Vision: Pitt Meadows is an accessible and inclusive community where all people can participate in work, play and other activities.

People living with disabilities contribute in all, or many of, the same ways as people who live without disability—often in unique and equally valuable ways. They want to live with dignity, independence and as equal and full participants in the community (reference: Disability Alliance BC 2023, *Developing Your First Accessibility Plan: A Guide for BC Prescribed Organization*).

Living with a disability can impact people in many different ways. It can contribute to difficulty with daily tasks, disproportionately higher physical and emotional stress, and being at higher risk in emergency situations. As reported in Canada's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (reference: *Employment and Social*

Development Canada (2022). Canada's Disability Inclusion Action Plan), people living with disability experience significant:

- barriers to employment and financial security, often with extra living costs associated with disability; and
- limits to community participation and connections because systems, services, and spaces are not designed with full inclusion in mind.

The Pitt Meadows Accessibility Plan ("Accessibility Plan") provides focus areas and recommendations to help make our community more accessible and inclusive. It is informed by people living with disabilities, their family, friends, caregivers, and City staff. It builds on related priorities identified in other City plans, strategies and reports.

Context

The Accessible British Columbia Act Part 3 (ABCA, 2021) describes three requirements for local government and service organizations to address accessibility in our communities: to establish an accessibility committee, develop an accessibility plan, and create a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility.

In 2022, the BC Government partnered with Disability Alliance BC (DABC) to provide resources for municipalities to develop accessibility plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the City.

In 2024, the Province drafted Accessible Service Delivery Standards (reference: Province of British Columbia 2024, Accessible Service Delivery Standard) and Employment Accessibility Standards (reference: Province of British Columbia 2024, Employment Accessibility Standard) to provide guidance on removing barriers for people with disabilities who are accessing services from, or who are employed by, a local government or prescribed organization.

Accessibility Standard Areas:

- Outdoor Spaces, Places, and Buildings
- Delivery of Services
- Education
- Employment
- Health
- Information and Communications
- Procurement

- Transportation

Key Concepts

Disability refers to the inability to participate fully and equally in society due to the interaction of an impairment and barrier(s). Intersecting forms of discrimination such as racism, colorism, sexism, genderism, and/or ageism also influence disability.

Impairments may be:

- Physical / mobility related
- Mental health related
- Intellectual / developmental
- Cognitive
- Learning
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Communication
- Sensory
- Neuro-diverse
- Functional limitation

Barriers may be caused by:

- Environments
- Attitudes
- Practices
- Policies
- Information
- Communications or technologies

Physical or mobility impairments may appear to be the most common disability because they can be highly visible. However, as reported in the Canadian Survey on Disability (reference: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022, released Dec. 1, 2023):

- the most common disability is pain-related, impacting 62% of people living with disability; and
- flexibility (40%), mobility (39%), and mental-health related (39%) are the second most common disabilities.

Age: Youth and seniors are experiencing an increased rate of disability.

Employment: Only 62% of adults with disabilities are employed, in contrast to 78% of those without disabilities, likely due to workplace barriers.

Community Profile

Pitt Meadows is a community of nearly 20,000 people located in Metro Vancouver. The City provides municipal services to its urban and agricultural areas and supports a wide variety of services and facilities, including fire protection, parks, recreation programs, a seniors centre, and youth programs.

Approximately 3600 of those aged 15 and older in Pitt Meadows are living with one or more disabilities that limit them in daily activities (reference: Extrapolated from data in the Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022, Statistics Canada, released Dec. 1, 2023). The overall population is projected to increase by approximately 25% by 2040, with an anticipated corresponding increase in people living with disability.

The Accessibility Plan includes policies and actions that complement those in other City reports, plans and strategies, including the:

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework (2024)
- Active Transportation Plan (2023)
- Strategic Plan (2023)
- Economic Development Strategic Plan (2023)
- Official Community Plan (2022)
- Housing Needs Report (2022)
- Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan (2021)
- Transportation Master Plan (2014)

Creating the Accessibility Plan

The approach to creating the Accessibility Plan was based on recommendations from Disability Alliance BC1 and input from the City's Community Support and Accessibility Committee. A consultant was contracted to plan and facilitate engagement, analyze data, and write the Accessibility Plan.

A research review provided a foundation for engagement activities and questions. Resources included: City strategies and plans; federal and provincial accessibility strategies and standards; and accessibility plans developed by other municipalities.

Engagement was designed to prioritize hearing from people living with disabilities, their family and/or caregivers, in conjunction with hearing from City staff and community interest holders.

Engagement Activities

Activities included:

- Community survey
- Staff survey
- Accessibility event
- Staff focus groups

Key questions:

- Where do people living with diverse disabilities experience accessibility barriers and how are they impacted?
- What programs, features, or policies support accessibility?
- What could make the City a more accessible community and employer?

"As anyone with a disability does, I've created a "safe/ comfort zone" and feel my best when I remain in that (usually just my home). However, that limits me from participating as an active member in my community." (quote from a survey participant).

Engagement Results and Recommendations

Data was analyzed to identify frequencies and themes within the ABCA accessibility standards framework. Engagement results are detailed in the Accessibility Plan | 2025 Engagement Summary.

Participation:

- 241 total engagement participants
- 83% of community survey respondents (191) have lived in Pitt Meadows for over five years
- 45% of community survey respondents live with one or more disabilities, including:
 - physical mobility 26%
 - mental health related 12%
 - neurodivergent 11%
 - visual impairment 6%
 - hearing impairment 5%

Community members and City staff participants said they valued the opportunity to share their experiences and recommendations to improve accessibility in Pitt Meadows. They identified general strengths and opportunities as well as overarching challenges.

“[I am] thankful for the City valuing input from the community to consider improvements. Proud to live in this city!” (quote from a survey participant).

Strengths:

- What makes Pitt Meadows an accessible community?
- Feeling welcome and respected in City facilities and outdoor spaces.
- Online, phone, and in-person options for connecting with the City.
- Accessibility features in City buildings, pedestrian crossings and sidewalks, designated parking spots and fitness equipment.

Opportunities:

There are opportunities to make Pitt Meadows more accessible by building on what is currently working well and implementing updates where possible.

- Enhance awareness and understanding of diverse types of disability to reduce stigma and discrimination and support inclusion in the community and the City workplace.
- Promote available accessibility features to increase community participation.
- Increase or update accessibility features in City facilities and encourage businesses to reduce barriers in their buildings. For example, by adding ramps, handrails, and/or elevators.
- Reduce barriers to mobility in urban areas and access to parks and trails by increasing safe street crossings and accessible parking.

Challenges:

Participants identified key accessibility barriers, including:

- Conditions or maintenance of sidewalks, train crossings, and outdoor spaces with inaccessible or unsafe surfaces.
- Historical public buildings that are difficult or expensive to update.
- Incomplete or inaccurate information about the availability of accessibility features, particularly for community activities or events, which increases

the need for significant advanced planning by people with disabilities and/or their support providers.

- Health needs that complicate going out into the community. For example, a lack of fully accessible washrooms or quiet places to rest.
- Environmental factors such as noise, lighting, and crowding that may impact people living with sensory or neurodiverse disabilities.
- Financial costs due to disability, such as for transportation or support, that make community participation opportunities unaffordable.

Accessibility Priorities

Engagement results were used to identify priority areas and actions to make Pitt Meadows more accessible and inclusive.

Priorities are structured using the accessibility standards framework. They are listed in priority order, based on engagement response frequencies.

Priority Areas

Outdoor Spaces, Places and Buildings: Design or update buildings, facilities, parks, and trails so that people living with different types of disabilities can access them safely and easily. This makes it possible for nearly all community members to contribute to and participate in programs, activities and events.

Transportation: Increase or add transportation accessibility features to support travel throughout the City for daily activities, work, socialization, learning, recreation, and entertainment. Consider street crossings, parking, transit stops, and other settings.

Service Delivery: Develop and implement accessible policies and practices for community programs, activities, events, and emergency services.

Information and Communications: Use accessible communications tools and practices so people living with different types of disabilities can better receive and understand information. Improve accessibility in digital and social media channels, print and presentations, signs and images, and other contexts.

Employment: Expand understanding of accessibility policies, resources, and supports for City employees.

Please note: Education, Health, and Procurement were not identified as significant priority areas during engagement.

Priority 1: Outdoor Spaces, Places and Buildings

Design or update buildings, facilities, parks, and trails so that people living with different types of disabilities can access them safely and easily. This makes it possible for nearly all community members to contribute to and participate in programs, activities and events.

Ongoing Actions:

- a. Continue to consider accessibility of recreation and leisure facilities through regular audits to ensure parks, trails, and civic facilities are accessible to people of every age and ability.
- b. Continue investments in fully accessible public washrooms, including along the dikes and in high traffic areas.
- c. Continue applying accessible and adaptable design standards to new developments.

2025 – 2028 Recommended Actions:

- a. Regularly assess existing accessibility features to ensure they are working properly, such as automatic doors and push buttons.
- b. Explore adding or increasing accessibility features in City facilities such as:
 - o ramps and handrails for people with balance or mobility challenges;
 - o improved lighting for people with low vision; and
 - o ceiling baffles in open spaces to reduce echo for people with hearing impairment.
- c. Explore ways to provide more accessible and continuous trails:
 - o with smooth surfaces and space for mobility aids to pass easily;
 - o replacing maze gates with bollards at entries and exits; and
 - o adding benches, with shade cover where possible.
- d. Explore ways to improve šx^whék^wnəs (Spirit Square) seating accessibility. Consider adding rails along seating rows and providing an accessible path to the upper-level seating for better sightlines.
- e. Expand accessible exercise equipment to include options that can be used while in a wheelchair.
- f. Consider new projects and renovations from the perspective of people using mobility aids as well as needs related to different disabilities, such as neuro-diverse or sensory disabilities.
- g. Review and as required, update the Adaptable Housing Policy in light of recent adaptable dwelling unit updates to the BC Building Code.

Priority 2: Transportation

Increase or add transportation accessibility features to support travel throughout the City for daily activities, work, socialization, learning, recreation, and entertainment. Consider street crossings, parking, transit stops, and other settings.

Ongoing Actions:

- a. Continue commitment to a walkable community.
- b. Continue to consider adequate pathway and street lighting, and paved pedestrian networks that are suitable for people of all ages and abilities.
- c. Continue to improve crossing configuration and safety by giving priority to pedestrians over vehicular traffic.
- d. Continue standardizing wayfinding features for easier navigation.
- e. Continue promoting accessible and affordable transportation.
- f. Continue exploring ways to address accessibility barriers at train crossings due to irregular surfaces and sharp drop-offs.

2025 – 2028 Recommended Actions:

- a. Develop a City policy [or another tool] to:
 - o strengthen sidewalk inspection policy related to uneven surfaces, breakage, gravel, tree roots and other barriers; and
 - o identify where additional crossing locations and letdowns would be helpful to reduce the need for detours.
- b. Assess and address accessibility and safety of pedestrian crossings.
Consider:
 - o letdown configurations to ensure they are even and not too steep;
 - o signal button ease of reach for mobility aid users;
 - o auditory and tactile indicators for people living with visual impairment;
 - o ways to improve visibility at intersections; and
 - o reinforcement of snow clearance and sandwich board location bylaws.
- c. Increase the number of accessible parking and drop-off locations near entertainment and cultural venues, at trailheads, and at access points along the dike system.
- d. Assess and address transit barriers. Consider:
 - o increasing the number of bus stop shelters; and

- o advocating for more bus stops, expanded routes, and a direct route to the hospital.

Priority 3: Service Delivery

Develop and implement accessible policies and practices for community programs, activities, events, and emergency services.

Ongoing Actions:

- a. Continue reinforcing Principles and Action Pillars defined in the City's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework (2024).
- b. Continue providing telephone and in-person services at City Hall.

2025 – 2028 Recommended Actions:

- a. Develop an accessibility planning framework for community events and include clear communication about accessibility options in event promotion.
- b. Explore accessible technology for all events and activities, from council meetings to community events. Provide audio and visual materials to meet diverse accessibility needs.
- c. Increase program options for youth living with disabilities and expand choices to include non-physical and virtual programs focused on shared interests.
- d. Review emergency management facilities, policy and practices to ensure consideration of accessibility. For example, ensure muster stations are accessible.

"Trying to take my daughter and her friends to activities is hindered by what is possible with mobility barriers. Does the place have stairs? Does it have handrails? Is there an elevator? Are there ramps for a walker? Does the playground have options? Can the bathrooms accommodate mobility needs? Are there automatic doors?" (quote from a survey participant).

Priority 4: Information and Communications

Use accessible communications tools and practices so people living with different types of disabilities can better receive and understand information. Improve accessibility in digital and social media channels, print and presentations, signs and images, and other contexts.

Ongoing Actions:

- a. Continue supporting accessibility features on the City's website.

- b. Continue providing livestream of the City's Public Council Meetings.
- c. Continue promoting a friendly, safe, and healthy community that values all people, including recognition of National AccessAbility Week.

2025 – 2028 Recommended Actions:

- a. Develop an accessible communications policy for sharing information with the community. Assess digital and print materials in the context of diverse disabilities.
- b. Provide clear and current information about accessibility features across City buildings, parks, trails, and events to support planning and participation by people living with disabilities.
- c. Develop an accessible signage policy that addresses diverse needs, such as low vision or sensory impairment. Consider:
 - o design features such as lighting, font size and colours, Braille, and providing a QR code to for voice option reading; and
 - o appropriate locations both in and around facilities as well as along sidewalks and trails.
- d. Recommend updates to Council Policy C004 Public Use of Municipal Billboards, to incorporate accessibility considerations.
- e. Partner with community organizations to increase community awareness and understanding of living with disability to reduce stigma and increase respectful and courteous behavior towards people living with diverse disabilities.
- f. Communicate areas of responsibility related to accessibility to the community and provide resources or guidance to support organizations and businesses in reducing barriers, including information about grant funding. Encourage installation of accessible features in businesses, such as automatic doors, ramps, handrails and fully accessible washrooms.

Priority 5: Employment

Expand understanding of accessibility policies, resources, and supports for City employees.

Ongoing Actions:

- a. Continue the commitment to being an inclusive, diverse and equitable employer and using the Community of Accessible Employers logo.
- b. Continue providing ergonomic assessments and/or modified work structures when needed.

2025 – 2028 Recommended Action:

- a. Develop a formal accessibility policy for hiring and employment practices, building on current guidelines and protocols. Work to:
 - o increase staff awareness of the available accommodations and how to access them; and
 - o provide staff training on the range of impairments that impact accessibility when managing or working with colleagues, including mental health and neurodiversity.

Implementation

The City will lead implementation of the Accessibility Plan—addressing barriers is a shared responsibility across all City departments.

Actions will be implemented based on the availability of resources, including the City's budget and grant funding. Some recommendations may be implemented in alignment with scheduled maintenance or construction.

Pitt Meadows has older infrastructure, railway crossings in busy areas, and a high proportion of rural or agricultural areas relative to the urban centre. Improving accessibility in these contexts requires significant coordination with the provincial and/or federal government.

People living with disability are diverse—Pitt Meadows' Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework reinforces a commitment to a friendly, safe and healthy community that values all people. Community organizations may also play a part and will be included through information sharing, outreach and engagement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The City of Pitt Meadows will review and update the Accessibility Plan at least once every three years, as required under ABCA. City staff will review progress and report annually to the Community Support and Accessibility Committee. The City will review the Terms of Reference for the Community Support and Accessibility Committee within the three-year timeframe of the Accessibility Plan, with a view to increasing representation from community members and City staff living with disabilities.

Feedback Mechanism

Options for community members and employees to contact the City about accessibility barriers:

- In person: Pitt Meadows City Hall (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)
- Phone: 604-465-5454
- Email: info@pittmeadows.ca

The City may explore additional accessibility features such as Video Relay Service (VRS) for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired, or Braille for people who are visually impaired or blind.

Notes

This plain text version of the City of Pitt Meadows Accessibility Plan 2025 has been structured using appropriate heading levels, paragraph styles and lists to support accessibility. When exported to PDF, these elements create document tags that enable screen reader navigation.

The full Accessibility Plan, that includes components such as images and colour formatting, is also available by visiting pittmeadows.ca/accessibility.