

*Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change:
The City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy*

**Phase 2: Multi-Year Action Plan
2024 – 2026**



The City of Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Peoples, who have lived on these lands since time immemorial.

As a City of Reconciliation, the City of Vancouver has committed to “form a sustained relationship of mutual respect and understanding with local First Nations and the Urban Indigenous community.” This is an ongoing and evolving commitment, and one that is essential to our path forward.



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Accessibility is not simply checking the box; it is about embedding it in the City's processes and culture. The City acknowledges that there will be continual work to increase accessibility for persons with disabilities. Implementing the Multi-Year Action Plan goes hand in hand with embedding a culture of vulnerability, in which we all listen to those with lived experiences of disabilities with appreciation, curiosity and commitment to learn and unlearn our own perceptions and biases and to challenge and dismantle stereotypes.

Working together, we can all contribute to the City's journey and commitment to work towards a vision where all people feel welcomed, included, and valued.

A Culture of Vulnerability

"As it is a state of being that is open, curious, and ready to have brave conversations with one another, experience each other's uniqueness, and to be willing to 'show up' in the space. When relationships reach this state of vulnerability we are in a better position to work together. Instead of seeing a body not able to perform in a "normative way", vulnerability creates opportunities where we can question, seek answers, and explore creative solutions together. It is a recognition that there is not one right way of doing things. Each of us needs to be transformed; dismantling our own stereotypes and assumptions, so that we can connect with each other, build relationships, and have opportunities where we can learn from each other."

~ *Dr. Brené Brown, Daring Greatly (2015)*

Executive Summary

On July 19, 2022, Vancouver City Council unanimously approved “*Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver’s Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1)*”. It was a significant achievement as it reflects the City’s commitment to support the full participation of persons with disabilities by establishing and maintaining inclusive services, programs, and infrastructure, and by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers. The aim of Phase 1 (2018 - 2022) was to establish definitions, principles, and accessibility commitments, along with high-level actions that were developed collaboratively with departments across the City.

Along with adoption of the Accessibility Strategy and its Accountability Framework, i.e., Phase 1 of the work, Council also gave direction for Phase 2 (2024 – 2026) to start. This phase included facilitating broader engagement with disability communities and developing a Multi-Year Action Plan. The Accessibility BC Act also required the City to develop an accessibility plan, assemble an Accessibility Committee to oversee the implementation of the plan, and develop a public feedback mechanism.

The Multi-Year Action Plan is comprised of nine Areas of Focus, eight of which were established in the original Accessibility Strategy. The ninth area – newly proposed – is Emergency Management and Climate Change, which arose as a cross-cutting priority during early Phase 2 planning and engagement discussions. In brief, the Areas of Focus are:

1. Built environment and public spaces
2. Transportation services, policies and programs
3. Housing policies, programs and design
4. Information and communications
5. Employment
6. Governance and engagement
7. Capacity and collaboration
8. Advocacy and working with other orders of government and agencies
9. Emergency management and climate change (proposed new)

A key consideration in developing the Multi-Year Action Plan is recognizing that the City’s scope, role and influence may not extend to all issues initially identified for action. In these instances, the action is scaled to the City’s specific role, and opportunities for advocacy and dialogue with partners are also identified.

This Multi-Year Action Plan summarizes prioritized actions across all nine Focus Areas. Within each Focus Area, the actions are presented as follows:

- Status updates on completed work
- Status updates on in-progress work
- Actions for future consideration

By implementing the Accessibility Strategy and Multi-Year Action Plan, the aim is to realize a Vancouver where: persons with disabilities will no longer have to contact an event organizer ahead of time to ensure that a location is physically accessible because all spaces are designed in an accessible manner; that persons with disabilities can take their time to complete an online form because there is no time limit and this becomes a norm for online form design choices; that there are variety settings of lighting within rooms that meet diverse needs and this is designed

within all spaces; that people will not question persons with disabilities if they use an alternative method of communication; and that persons with disabilities always have choices and a say in the processes that affect them and that they are welcomed, valued, and belong.

With shifting demographics where accessibility needs are growing, this work is more imperative than it has ever been. Addressing accessibility needs to be within the fabric of the City so that innate ableist culture can be eliminated. The City of Vancouver invites everyone to join this journey, to transform attitudes and embed change to plan for and make *an accessible city for all*.

Defining “disability”

The term “persons with disabilities” includes people who experience physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related impairments, inclusive of seniors and people with lived experience of mental health challenges or substance use- related disabilities.

~ Definition of “disability,” adopted by City of Vancouver, July 2022

“I would like the City of Vancouver to take the lead on accessibility.” *~Dialogue Participant, Phase 1 Accessibility Strategy consultations*

“There needs to be an advocate or a community connector for how to access services (transportation, housing, employment). E.g., An office of advocacy in the city to help navigate services, or a 3-1-1 with an outreach component (if they need help executing it, then an outreach person who can come to your home and do the application with you).” *~Broader engagement participant, June 2023*

“More disability visibility! Disability is not a bad word. Autism is not a bad word. Give disabled individuals what they need to thrive, not just survive.”
~ Participant, broader engagement, June 2023

SECTION 1: Background

Accessibility Legislation

The City of Vancouver has a responsibility to uphold and protect human rights, including making best efforts to create an accessible city for everyone and prioritizing the needs of persons with disabilities wherever possible. The [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) and more recently the *Global Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) have sought ways to challenge ableism and urge countries and municipal governments to take concrete actions to be more accessible and inclusive. Acknowledging harmful attitudes and systems that perpetuate ableism are critical steps in addressing issues that stakeholders and making Vancouver an inclusive, welcoming, and accessible city for all.

Nationally and provincially, the [Accessibility Canada Act](#) (2019) and the [Accessible British Columbia Act](#) (2021) provide the mandate for developing and enacting accessibility standards. The Accessible BC Act requires all “preferred organizations”, which includes municipalities to create an accessibility plan, assemble an accessibility committee, and develop a public feedback mechanism. This piece of legislation reinforced the responsibility of the City of Vancouver to meet certain requirements by September 2023 and have also influenced the development of the Multi Year Action Plan.

For additional statistics and the context of the disability population in BC and Canada, see [Appendix A](#).

Understanding “disability”: The City of Vancouver includes age-related impairments within the definition of disability. It is evident that everyone is likely to experience a temporary, periodic, or permanent change in their functioning at some point in their life, and those who live to old age will likely experience increasing difficulties in functioning and cognition. Meeting the needs of this growing population of older adults who are also more likely to experience different types of disability emphasizes the importance of Vancouver becoming an accessible and age-friendly city.

Although age 65 is often used as a benchmark for identifying older adults and seniors, it is important to note that people with disabilities experience aging in different ways. People’s disabilities change over time, often becoming more complex and challenging to deal with as they age. People with disabilities may also experience a faster aging process. ~ *Access Independent Living Society, 2015. “Aging with a Disability”*. <https://cilt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Aging-with-a-Disability-Focus-Group-Report.pdf>

“There is a ghettoizing of people with mental illnesses into high rises/apartment buildings. We have no way of actually truly living in the community. Having some support of being integrated, for those that can. Everyone just gets boxed into the same thing, and we’re not really integrating people into a mixed environment, so people can learn that those with mental illnesses are all around them and we all have some rights and responsibilities to learn.” ~ *Broader engagement participant, June 2023*

Looking Back: Accessibility Strategy Phase 1 (2018 – 2022)

Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: The City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy was adopted by the City of Vancouver on July 19, 2022. The Strategy outlined definitions, guiding principles, legislation, and concrete actions as a comprehensive starting point for the City to begin its work.

Phase 1 of the Accessibility Strategy was guided by the Accessibility Taskforce which was made up of members of the disability communities. There is no “one size fits all” approach to creating an accessible city. Persons with disabilities intersects with many identities such as age, gender, race, and sexual orientation, immigration, and religion, which makes accessibility challenging, complex, multi-layered, and dynamic.

In following the “nothing about us, without us” principle, staff have made concentrated effort to centre the voices of the disability communities in the process and outcomes of the Accessibility Strategy and subsequent action planning. For example, the eight original Key Areas of Focus in the Accessibility Strategy were identified through community engagement in Phase 1. However, through the Phase 2 engagement processes, a ninth area was identified, Emergency Management and Climate Change, and subsequently included as a focus area.

The Accessibility Strategy Phase 1 also proposed an Accountability Framework to ensure accountability at each step of the process of designing, implementing and monitoring the Accessibility Strategy. Continued implementation of the Accountability Framework is described in Section 4 of the Multi-Year Action Plan.

The overarching goals of the Accessibility Strategy, established in Phase 1, continue to inform the Phase 2 Multi-Year Action Plan:

- Build inclusive communities and provide an accessible environment in which all individuals have equitable access to the City’s services, programs, and infrastructure.
- Build an inclusive and accessible work environment and culture within the City, in which all departments are supported and encouraged to embed an accessibility and inclusion lens into daily operations.
- Ensure that the City’s hiring practices are inclusive and that barriers to the recruitment, retention, accommodation, and advancement of employees with disabilities are removed, and where possible.

“I’ve lost all of my ability to get around independently. This is not accessible transportation. We can’t use a cookie cutter approach where we get one segment of PWD. A lot of us were shut out because we don’t have a wheelchair taxi we can use. It would be simple to have 10% of taxis that are a different design. This is huge for me. One of the reasons I moved here was because I could take a taxi, and now I can’t.” ~*Broader engagement participant, June 2023*

“There’s currently no legislation in the City of Vancouver for indoor air quality. I’ve contacted the City who referred me to Metro Vancouver. Metro Vancouver referred me to their website – it states that the only air quality bylaws are for schools and hospitals. Most people in Vancouver are living in multi family housing (condos, apartments, etc.) but there is no legislation to help improve the common areas that everyone has to access.” ~ *Broader engagement participant, June 2023*

SECTION 2: Development of the Multi-Year Action Plan

Community Engagement in Planning Process

Accessibility planning requires deep listening with the disability communities to learn about how they navigate the city along with the daily challenges and barriers they may face. In community engagements (Phase 1 and 2) staff used a variety of trauma-informed practices to cultivate spaces for safe, open, and honest conversations. City staff made a conscious effort to ensure that individuals that may not be normally included in City engagement processes were invited to share their feedback.

In Phase 1, the City hosted 23 virtual dialogues with people with lived experience of disability along with other intersecting identities, as well as family members and/or caregivers. To complement this, an on-line survey was created through the City's platform, Shape Your City. The dialogues were held between April to November 2021, and the survey was open for the month of July 2021.

In Phase 2, staff facilitated three broader engagement sessions (two in-person sessions and one online session) with disability communities from May 15 to June 30, 2023. The purpose of these engagements was to share the focus areas and confirm that they reflected the needs and priorities of the disability communities. In addition, an online survey through the City's platform, Shape Your City, opened for the month of June, as another way to provide feedback.

Phase 2 engagement sessions followed a World Café method. Tables were set up around the room representing the different focus areas and participants were able to move around the room and share their experience and feedback on each focus area.

When analyzing the information gathered during the engagement sessions a new focus area emerged: Emergency Management and Climate Change. Many participants noted that they felt unsafe during the heat dome or cold snaps in Vancouver and wanted some action to be taken in this area. As a result of this engagement, a new Key Area of Focus has been proposed for inclusion in the Multi-Year Action Plan.

Staff developed engagement reports after each engagement phase (see [Phase 1 report](#), Phase 2 to come) on what was heard.

Internal Working Group

An internal working group (IWG), consisting of staff representatives from each department across the City, was created through the development of the Accessibility Strategy for both Phase 1 and 2. A culture of vulnerability was instilled within the group by learning from each other, cultivating a sense of wonder and curiosity with one another. Open and authentic conversations were cultivated throughout the meetings resulting in accessibility champions and allies among the IWG.

During Phase 1, the IWG met every two weeks to build cohesion across the different departments and to achieve a common understanding of accessibility and disability along with its principles. This was also a space where each of the departments could lead an "accessibility moment" where they shared their on-going accessibility work within their department so they could learn from one another.

During Phase 2, the IWG met monthly and was primarily tasked with developing the Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP) for the Accessibility Strategy. Each department worked with their respective divisions to develop a workplan for their actions. Each month, a representative from each department shared their development of their own MYAP so that all members can learn and support each other. Working with their respective teams, each department determined the milestones of the work for the actions laid out in Phase 1, along with the resources and capacity level. The milestones of the work were separated into completed work since Phase 1, current work or work underway; and future actions for consideration that require resource and staff allocation.

The internal working group has been instrumental in the development of the Multi-Year Action Plan.

Key Areas of Focus Informing the MYAP

The Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1) identified eight Key Areas of Focus that reflect the most pressing concerns for the disability communities in Vancouver; from these, goals, actions and outcomes were identified. In the development of this Phase 2 Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP), the Key Areas of Focus from Phase 1 were retained as the ‘scaffolding’ for the Action Plan. As described above, in addition, a ninth Key Area of Focus – Emergency Management and Climate Change was now incorporated in the MYAP as a proposed new area (see Appendix B for further background).

The following is a summary of the nine Key Areas of Focus and their Primary Goals:

Accessibility Strategy and Multi-Year Action Plan Key Areas of Focus:

Key Area of Focus	Primary Goal
1/ Built Environment and Public Spaces	Ensure access to physical infrastructure in the city by applying universal design principles to built environment.
2/ Transportation Services, Policies and Programs	Ensure persons with disabilities can carry out their daily needs by applying universal design principles to transportation planning and design.
3/ Housing Policies, Programs and Design	Ensure adequate housing options by creating accessible, affordable, market and non-market housing that meets needs of persons with disabilities.
4/ Information and Communication	Ensure connection and wayfinding throughout the city by providing communication supports, accessible websites, formats and digital content.
5/ Employment	Support a diverse and inclusive workforce by increasing opportunities and reducing barriers in the workforce.

<p>6/ Governance and Engagement</p>	<p>Provide equitable access to municipal programs and services by reducing barriers to participation in civic life.</p>
<p>7/ Capacity and Collaboration</p>	<p>Build capacity and foster collaboration among the disability non-profit sector to better address the challenges of the community.</p>
<p>8/ Advocacy and Working with other levels of Government</p>	<p>Ensure consistent access to public services and participation in public life by integrating and collaborating with other orders of government on accessibility issues.</p>
<p>9/ Emergency Management and Climate Change [*New Proposed*]</p>	<p>Apply an accessibility lens to all aspects of emergency and disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.</p>

Fig. 1. Examples of progress on the City's Accessibility Strategy implementation



MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION GUIDE
INFORMATION FOR CITY STAFF





THE RIGHT FIT
MATCHING WHEELCHAIR USERS TO ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

Accessible Street Design

Introduction
Design for Inclusion
Various abilities, various considerations, one goal
Seven Principles of Universal Design

Basic Human Factors
Definitions
Mobility impaired and visually impaired people
Wheelchair users
Walking distances
Standing

Sidewalks and Paths
Sidewalks
Curb Ramps
Surfaces
Road Crossings
Street Furniture
Street Work
Street Trees
Landscaping

Parking
General provisions
Parking control equipment

Bus Stops

Signs and Information

Lighting

Traffic Management

Consultation, Training and Management

Summary

References

TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES, EMBEDDING CHANGE:

**THE CITY OF VANCOUVER'S ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY
(Phase 1)**



The City of Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the x'məḱə'yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and salilwətat (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples, who have lived on these lands since time immemorial.

As a City of Reconciliation, the City of Vancouver has committed to "form a sustained relationship of mutual respect and understanding with local First Nations and the urban Indigenous community." This is an ongoing and evolving commitment, and one that is essential to our path forward.





**Hosting Accessible City Public Events and Meetings
Guidelines for City Staff**



This checklist is intended to assist City of Vancouver and Park Board staff in planning public events, such as consultations and celebrations, so that these are equally accessible to, and inclusive of, community members such as persons with disabilities, seniors/ elders, and trans, gender variant and Two-Spirit individuals.

City of Vancouver - Hosting Accessible City Public Events and Meetings
Adapted from Guidelines developed by Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee

SECTION 3: Multi-Year Action Plan

When developing the Multi-Year Action Plan, each City department began by identifying high-level actions within their specific Key Area of Focus as laid out in Phase 1. Departments identified actions which had already been completed, ongoing or planned actions, and actions for future considerations, which may require resource allocation (financial and/or staff).

Completed Actions (as of June 2024) are listed by Key Area of Focus in [Appendix C](#).

FOCUS AREA 8 Advocacy and Working with Other Orders of Government and Agencies	
COMPLETED	
Action(s):	Outcome(s):
Piloting the Reduced Fare Transit Pilot study, providing free 1-zone transit passes to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City staff produced a memo that went to Council in 2022.

FOCUS AREA 7 Capacity and Collaboration	
COMPLETED	
Action(s):	Outcome(s):
Hire a Cultural Equity and Accessibility planner to develop and deliver programs on equity and accessibility while providing pathways into ongoing support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hired a Cultural Equity & Accessibility Planner who supports the work of the Accessibility Strategy and the delivery of the Cultural Equity and Accessibility grants and acts as a liaison for community groups.
Work with the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee to convene focus groups with people with disabilities to inform departmental policy e.g., Culture Shift and the Commemoration Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convened two meetings with the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee which informed both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Commemoration Framework. Ongoing engagement with PDAC continues to occur for this work.

Building on this work, **Priority Actions Currently In Progress** are listed by Key Area of Focus in this section of the Multi-Year Action Plan. Where possible, details are included for:

- Work in progress (i.e., examples of initiatives); and
- Lead department(s)

Note that some Priority Actions may be cited in more than one place in the MYAP, i.e., they may show as Work in Progress, and also as Completed Actions and/or as Future Considerations. This is because certain initiatives related to the Priority Action may have been completed, but there may still be work remaining within the overall Priority Action area of work.

The **Multi-Year Action Plan (Work in Progress and Future Considerations)** is listed the following pages. See [Appendix D](#) for the acronyms and abbreviations.

FOCUS AREA 1		Built Environment and Public Spaces	
Priority Action(s)		Work In Progress	Dept.
1.1	Implement Rick Hansen accessibility standards, when feasible, for existing City-owned buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to conduct accessibility audits that identify and prioritize required improvements. Aim to certify three childcare facilities with the Rick Hansen accessibility certification rating and provide recommendations for accessibility upgrades. Aim to survey 30 City of Vancouver facilities using the Rick Hansen Foundation accessibility rating. 	REFM - FPD
1.2	Identify potential major renovations for existing buildings that could target Rick Hansen Gold Certification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore feasibility of applying the Rick Hansen Foundation Gold certification to the PNE Amphitheater and the Fire Headquarters. 	REFM - FPD
1.3	Continue to deliver Universal Inclusive Design and Accessibility Program (UIDAP) implementation for public-facing City-owned buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade the accessibility of the south entrance of City Hall in two prioritized locations. Implement minor upgrades in individual washrooms for the next four priority Community Centres. 	REFM - FPD
1.4	Develop accessibility design guidelines for EV charging infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with BC Hydro, other Metro Vancouver jurisdictions, and the disability community to develop guidelines. 	PDS-S

[1] ACTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION			
Action(s):	Dept.	Funding Required	Integrated in staff work
Change the Encroachment By-law to accommodate accessibility requirements over City land (e.g., wheelchair ramps).	ENG		✓
Explore other accessibility audit processes that will complement the Rick Hansen Certification process.	REFM – FPD		✓
Increase installation of publicly accessible electrical outlets in all public spaces.	ENG/ PARKS	✓	
Increase installation of grab bars alongside urinals and toilets in all newly renovated City-owned facilities.	ENG REFM - FPD	✓	

FOCUS AREA 2		Transportation Services, Policies and Programs	
Priority Action(s):		Work In Progress:	Dept.
2.1	Improve navigation measures through City-wide programs and pedestrian upgrades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve signals through the Accessible Signal Program. Undertake an external accessibility review of the Engineering Design Manual. Review any existing programs that impact street assets that affect persons with disabilities. 	ENG - T
2.2	Reduce the accessibility barriers on sidewalks and pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspect all sidewalks within the City (approximately 2200 km) annually (Sidewalk Hazard Inspection program). 	ENG - T

	through City-wide programs and pedestrian upgrades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build new sidewalk in areas that are missing sidewalks through the New Sidewalk Program. Repair damaged sidewalks through the Sidewalk Repair Program. Construct over 100 new curb ramps annually to increase accessibility. 	
2.3	Increase the number of seats available on and along sidewalks and other pedestrian paths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install new benches (approximately 150-200). Procure a new street furniture contract to provide more seating. 	ENG – T + SA
2.4	Upgrade bus stops for universal accessibility standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide more seating and shelter amenities at bus stop. Improve designs for accessibility via new street furniture contracts. Install landing pads for ramp deployment at bus stop (approximately 20 per year). 	ENG – T + SA
2.5	Increase the number and availability of on-street accessible parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install more accessible parking spaces. Test for some shorter-term accessible spaces near hospital areas, if feasible (e.g., 10 mins or 15 mins). Explore new updates to the design of on-street accessible parking spaces. 	ENG - T
2.6	Explore criteria for the installation of accessible parking zones on-street in residential areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test out a new request-based system to consider on-street accessible spaces for single family neighbourhoods. Monitor the uptake of the on-street program and adjust rules and criteria based on uptake. Install new accessible spaces and signage as needed (approximately five per year). 	ENG - T
2.7	Improve bike racks for a wider variety of bicycles and mobility aids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve bike parking amenities. Install approximately 400 new standard 'U' bike racks. Converting approximately 1,300 parking metres to post and ring racks. 	ENG – T + SA
2.8	Revise patio program guidelines to include accessibility policy and design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and incorporate accessibility policy and design into revised patio program guidelines that can enhance accessibility of patios on public property, where feasible. 	ENG – T + SU

[2]	ACTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION		
Action(s):	Dept.	Funding Required	Integrated in staff work
Explore ways to increase funding and capacity to accelerate the delivery of new sidewalks, sidewalk repairs, new curb ramps, and accessible pedestrian signals.	ENG - T	✓	
Include snow removal of accessible parking spaces and pathways through the Standards of Maintenance By-law.	ENG - T		✓
Increase the drop-off and pick up zones for people to pick up and better serve persons with disabilities.	ENG - T		✓

FOCUS AREA 3		Housing Policies, Programs and Design	
Priority Action(s):		Work In Progress:	Dept
3.1	Explore changes to the City's Building By-law and the Zoning and Development By-law to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the draft of the BC Building Code, including changes with spatial impacts. 	PDS

	improve accessibility in existing regulations and policies with the upcoming changes to the BC Building Code to advance accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the building industry to address the updated BC Building Code requirements that came into effect in March 2024. Review the Vancouver Building By-law accessibility changes to align with the new requirements for the BC Building Code. 	
3.2	Explore potential changes to the Housing Design and Technical Guidelines to increase the number of accessible units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Accessibility Design Guidelines from other jurisdictions to inform standards in accessibility. Determine if funding is needed to encourage potential design of accessible units. 	PDS - HRP + CMO - VHDO
3.3	Improve accessibility in emergency shelters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research to understand current context and potential opportunities, as well as budget implications. Work with BC Housing, non-profit operations and persons with disabilities who are experiencing or are at-risk of homelessness to identify changes that will improve accessibility in existing shelter designs. 	ACCS - HHS
3.4	Continue to connect non-profit operators with the Right Fit program to assist in matching accessible units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage non-profit housing operators to connect with the Right to Fit program to assist people with disabilities to accessible units. 	CMO – VHDO + PDS - HRP

[3]	ACTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION		
Action(s):	Dept.	Funding Required	Integrated in staff work
Add requirements for accessible path of travel to low-density housing forms.	PDS + DBL	✓	
Engage with the disability community to gather feedback on policies and guidelines (e.g., 5% requirement for accessible units) of new city-owned social and supportive housing projects.	ACCS + CMO + PDS		✓

FOCUS AREA 4		Information and Communications	
Priority Action(s):		Work In Progress:	Dept.
4.1	Create plain language materials and provide options that consider accessibility barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use plain language principles, where possible, in all published print and digital/social content. Continue to create communications materials for projects in plain language where possible. 	CMO - CEC
4.2	Maintain best practices on plain language on the City's digital channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify training opportunities for digital specialists. 	TS – DC
4.3	Ensure that the City's website meet the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a design system with the Design Style Guide (DSG) to provide a usable and accessible user experience. Emphasize the importance of accessibility in technology projects during procurement. Invest in a user testing platform that will address challenges for assessing the impact of digital changes and improvements. Continue to improve all new and existing websites and applications with accessibility. 	TS - DC
4.4	Apply an accessibility lens for all communications and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement live streaming services for key events for those unable to attend in person and broadening our audience reach. Implement accessibility requirements for events. 	CMO – CCO - ERP

	materials during municipal elections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use plain language for materials, such as proclamations, communications, website updates and social media content. 	
4.5	Apply an accessibility lens for all communications materials and processes during emergency events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to launch a campaign to promote neighbours to help each other during an emergency. Consult with the City's Accessibility Working Group around messaging of communications materials. Improve public education, engagement communication and alerts related to emergency events. Scope accessibility audit and updates to public education materials. 	VFRS-PE CMP - OCSO
4.6	Develop messaging to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities, along with other events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share information and events with staff on City's intranet. Continue to work with Council to recognize the day. Offer an event to build awareness of persons with disabilities and to challenge ableism. 	CMO - CEC

[4]	ACTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION		
Action(s):	Dept.	Funding Required	Integrated in staff work
Explore the feasibility of creating an accessible building guidebook for the building industry (including, developers, designers and builders).	DBL	✓	

FOCUS AREA 5		Employment	
Priority Action(s):		Work In Progress:	Dept
5.1	Continue to provide different types of disability-related training for staff depending on their roles within the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of staff taking disability awareness training. Continue to work with Developmental Disabilities Association to develop a course focusing on people with developmental disabilities. Continue to provide Rick Hansen certification training for staff involved in building design and planning. 	HR + REFM - +FPD ALL Dept
5.2	Communicate the City's medical accommodation guide with staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use available internal communication channels to socialize the City's Medical Accommodation Guide. 	HR
5.3	Continue to support Employee Resource Groups (ERG), as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide administrative, logistical, and operational support to ERGs. 	CMO - EO
5.4	Increase an understanding of inclusive employment best practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage with the Presidents Group to share accessibility best practices. 	HR
5.5	Ensure there is a statement about equity and accessibility in all City job postings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in progress. 	HR

[5]	ACTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION		
Action(s):	Dept.	Funding Required	Integrated in staff work

Review and update the accommodation process for City Staff, including policy review, jurisdictional scan and review of best practices and protocols.	HR + CMO - EO	✓	
Monitor and respond to changing demand for accessibility consultation, accommodations requests and other services.	HR + CMO - EO	✓	

FOCUS AREA 6		Governance and Engagement	
Priority Action(s):		Work In Progress:	Dept.
6.1	Identify and plan for accessibility considerations during engagement planning, outreach and delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advise teams on how to identify and respond to accessibility considerations during engagement planning. ▪ Encourage all staff to review and use the Accessible Events Checklist when planning events. ▪ Provide engagement options that consider technological barriers and cultural considerations (e.g., translated paper copies of surveys) to reach audiences with limited access to technology in more accessible ways. ▪ Provide communication and engagement materials translated to plain language to offer more accessible communications during engagement. 	CMO – CEC
6.2	Identify and prioritize Council meetings, advisory committee meetings, large-scale events and projects that require Closed Captioning and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore an AI system and accuracy testing, and other ASL options with the goal of rolling out to Council meetings. ▪ Ensure accessibility needs are met during meetings with the Persons with Disability Advisory Committee, Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the Older Persons and Elder Advisory Committee. ▪ Explore changes to Council Summary Forms (CSF's) to include an “opt in” option on Council Reports that need ASL interpretation and/or closed captioning. ▪ Hire external interpretation depending on the audience/reach, type of content (e.g. critical info) and amount of lead-up time to make arrangements. ▪ Recommend interpreters to accommodate individuals' access needs. 	CMO - CC CMO - CEC
6.3	Create an online directory on the City's website listing accessible services and supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with various departments to scope out the project. ▪ Take inventory of services and programs offered to people with disabilities. 	TS – 311/DC ACCS - SPP
6.4	Explore existing By-laws with an equity and accessibility lens, in alignment with the Equity Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review all existing by-laws with an equity and accessibility lens. 	CMO – EO + All Depts

[6] ACTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION			
Action(s):	Dept.	Funding Required	Integrated in staff work
Provide information sessions/outreach to the building industry (including developers, designers and builders) in conjunction with subject matter experts and members of the disability communities.	DBL + ACCS		✓

Use the feedback from the 2022 Election, to inform accessibility planning in the 2026 Election.	CMO - CCO		✓
Ensure food and beverage services at City facilities (e.g. civic theatres and other facilities) are accessible.	ACCS/ Parks	✓	
Ensure City food and beverage services provided at public engagements events are accessible.	CMO + ACCS	✓	
Review Zoning and Development By-law, and other related By-laws with an accessibility and equity lens.	PDS	✓	

FOCUS AREA 7		Capacity and Collaboration		
Priority Action(s):		Work In Progress:		Dept.
7.1	Explore options to equitably prioritize organizations serving people with disabilities in Social Policy and Projects, and Arts, Culture and Tourism grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to fund local non-profit organizations providing services to the disability communities through Multi Year Grants Program. ▪ Continue to support disabled artists, and those advocating for disability justice in the arts and culture sector through the Cultural Equity Grant Program. ▪ Continue to prioritize infrastructure grants for planning and upgrades to cultural facilities and non-profit buildings that meet or exceed accessibility standards. ▪ Require organizations receiving operational funding to provide appropriate services in an accessible and safe way through eligibility criteria. 	ACCS – SPP	ACCS - ACT
7.2	Support the creation of a cross-disability network/coalition in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to fund disability organizations involved in creating a cross-disability network/coalition to advance accessibility and inclusion. 	ACCS-SPP	
7.3	Continue to support non-profit space needs that prioritize organizations serving seniors, people with disabilities, and people experiencing mental health and substance use challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate accessibility, equity, and reconciliation lenses into the operator selection process. 	ACCS - SPP	

[7] ACTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION			
Action(s):	Dept.	Funding Required	Integrated in staff work
Promote the importance of including people with mental health challenges and lived experience of substance use in collaborations that address accessibility challenges.	ACCS - SPP		✓

FOCUS AREA 8		Advocacy and Working with Other Orders of Government and Agencies		
Priority Action(s):	Work In Progress:		Dept.	

8.1	Ensure that the City of Vancouver complies with the Accessible British Columbia Act.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to hold regular meetings with the Accessibility Committee. Finalize Multi-Year Action Plan for the Accessibility Strategy. 	ACCS – SP & CMO - EO
8.2	Advocate to respective governments on accessibility issues that are identified and prioritized through community engagement, the public feedback mechanism, and the Accessibility Committee.	<p>Current priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with community partners to understand and advocate for better access to early learning and childcare services for children with disabilities. Engage with senior levels of government and related agencies to improve accessibility within emergency and disaster management. Advocate for ongoing inter-governmental coordination to support persons with disabilities during disasters and emergencies. Advocate on accessibility issues related to housing that fall outside of the City's jurisdiction (e.g., increased shelter rates for persons with disabilities and funding for NPO housing providers). Advocate to the federal government to make the federal plastic straw ban more accessible by allowing food vendors to give out flexible plastic straws when requested by people who need them to drink or eat. 	ACCS – SPP & CMO – OCSO & ACCS – CS & PDS – HRP & DBL
8.3	Address accessibility issues in TransLink and Provincial rapid transit station designs, guidelines, and requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire a Greenest City Scholar in the Transit Integration and Project Branch to research and adopt best practices in accessible rapid transit station design. Continue to advance discussions with TransLink and the Province of BC on rapid transit station design guidelines and requirements with a focus on the planned UBC Extension. 	ENG – T - TIP

[8] ACTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION			
Action(s):	Dept.	Funding Required	Integrated in staff work
Update and/or adapt the interim public feedback mechanism to ensure it meets the needs of disability communities.	CMO – EO ACCS - SP	✓	
Participate in regional discussions with other municipalities and TransLink to advocate for accessibility design guidelines and improved regional consistency at bus stops.	ENG – T – TIP		✓
Support non-profit organizations to create a peer-led knowledge hub to address mental health and substance use stigma in the health and social service sector.	ACCS - SPP	✓	
Work with other municipalities to streamline accessibility guidelines in street design and ensure consistency across the region.	ENG – T		✓

FOCUS AREA 9		Emergency Management and Climate Change [*PROPOSED NEW*]	
Priority Action(s):	Work In Progress:	Dept.	
9.1	Improve the inclusivity of people with disabilities in existing educational and emergency preparation materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the existing educational materials developed by City Protective Services (Fire and Life Safety) to include accessibility procedures in emergencies within City facilities, including role and function-specific updates for people with disabilities and their special needs/assistance in fire emergencies. 	CMO – OSCO

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the Fire Safety Plan’s standards for “Persons with Disabilities - Information Sheet” to better capture vital details about staff needs in the case of an emergency evacuation in City-owned buildings. 	VFRS - PE
9.2	Improve supports, safety, and independence/autonomy for persons with disabilities in extreme weather emergencies, emergency response and recovery plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to meet with people with lived experience to engage on risks, vulnerabilities and gaps in hazard mitigation and planning. Explore specific interventions to help people with disabilities in emergencies (e.g., cool kits, community partnerships, cooling vests and air filters). Promote the Snow Angel program to help neighbours to shovel snow. 	CMO – OSCO VFRS - PE
9.3	Work with organizations to identify accessible spaces during emergencies, such as heat domes and other climate change events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate between Vancouver Emergency Management Agency and Social Policy and Projects to build partnerships with organizations. Continue to conduct site visits at neighbourhood houses and disability-serving organizations to better understand challenges associated with facilities. Explore capital grants that could be used to retrofit community-serving spaces for accessible and resilient design. Continue to distribute extreme heat supplementary funding to prioritize efficiency and removal of barriers, when feasible. 	ACCS + CMO - OSCO
9.4	Ensure people with disabilities are supported in the event of an emergency within SROs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train SRO managers on emergency procedures. Develop a program that supports people with disabilities that are living in SROs. 	VFRS
9.5	Ensure that the standard template design for Emergency Evacuation Signs is compliant with the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement user-friendly and accessible Emergency Evacuation signs developed by City Protective Services’ (Fire and Life Safety) at applicable City-owned and operated buildings. 	CMO - OSCO
9.6	Develop a working group to review evacuation procedures in City-owned buildings with an accessibility lens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in progress and/or forthcoming. 	CMO- OSCO
9.7	Encourage providers of First Responder training to include an accessibility module for internal staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in progress and/or forthcoming. 	HR

[9]	ACTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION			
Action(s):	Dept.	Funding Required	Integrated in staff work	
Review and revise all Fire Safety Plans to include emergency evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities for all City-Owned facilities.	VFRS + CMO - OSCO		✓	
Update Emergency Preparedness Public Education and Engagement materials through an accessibility lens.	VFRS - PE/ VEMA	✓		
Ensure that the accessibility changes are incorporated in the Vancouver Fire By-laws.	ACCS – SPP + VFRS	✓		
Review and improve evacuation plans and displacement supports through an accessibility lens.	CMO - OSCO	✓		
Train Emergency Management staff and volunteers on psychological safety and disability justice.	CMO - OSCO	✓		

SECTION 4: Accountability Mechanisms & Reporting

Accountability Principles

Below are guiding principles identified in Phase 1 of the Accessibility Strategy, as part of the Accountability Framework. These principles are also intended to support staff to be accountable during the implementation phase of the Multi-Year Action Plan.

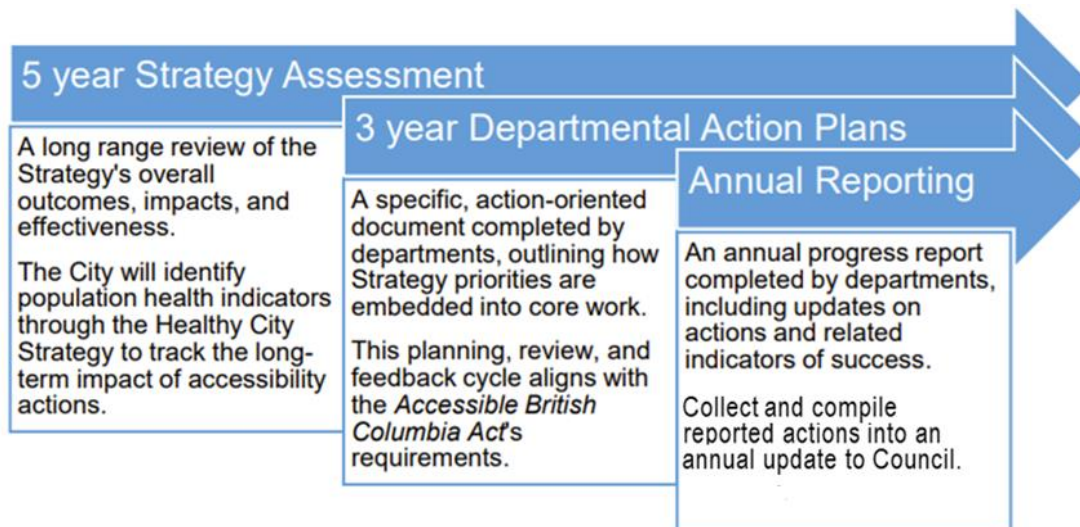
- **Transparency:** share context, information and trends that will feed into informed and equitable decision-making.
- **Consistency:** provide regular progress reports to the Accessibility Committee, City Leadership Team and Mayor and Council that will be publicly available.
- **Proactive:** identify and leverage opportunities to support and advance accessibility, including timely allocation of resource within the annual budgeting process.
- **Responsibility:** foster a culture of self-reflection, learning and taking responsibility for errors or oversights.
- **Openness:** create opportunities for expression and discussion of dissenting views, needs, concerns, and priorities.

In alignment with these guiding principles, it is important to have internal and external reporting mechanisms that provide transparency in the implementation process. The *Accessible British Columbia Act* also legislates a public accountability approach that includes ongoing monitoring, public feedback, an advisory committee, and annual reporting.

Reporting

Internal Reporting: Scheduled Reports

To ensure transparency and accountability, per the Accountability Framework in the Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1), staff will be reporting on the progress of the Multi-Year Action Plan in various ways:



See [Appendix D](#) and [Appendix F](#) for the reporting forms.

External Reporting Mechanisms

Two mechanisms are primarily employed to achieve external reporting: the newly formed Accessibility Committee and the Public Feedback mechanism.

Accessibility Committee

Under Section 9 of the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, the City of Vancouver is required to establish an Accessibility Committee to: a) assist in identifying barriers to individuals in or interacting with the City; and b) advise on how to remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the City. The Accessibility Committee was established and held its first meeting in November 2023.

The Committee consists of 16 members, including 11 community members with lived experience and five non-voting City staff. There are two community members that are also involved with the City's advisory committees, Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC) to ensure that there is open communication between all the groups. Five of the committee members have one-year term and the remainder carry a two-year term. This is to ensure that there is continuity on the committee. The committee will meet six times a year.

Staff members come from various departments, including Real Estate, Environment and Facilities Management; Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability; Human Resources; Engineering; and Civic Engagement and Communication. All staff have been appointed by their respective General Managers to ensure accountability, direct feedback, and communication.

City staff work with the Accessibility Committee to coordinate the monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of actions.

The goals of the Accessibility Committee are to:

- Provide guidance and advice on the development of the Accessibility Strategy.
- Help with the development of a public feedback mechanism that identifies accessibility barriers and provides advice to the City on how to address barriers identified through the feedback mechanism.
- Embed an accessibility lens on the City's activities such as policy development, by-laws, and planning decisions.
- Review and provide feedback on the annual progress report of the Accessibility Strategy, including monitoring progress and timelines, and providing recommendations on priorities.
- Review and provide feedback on the three-year progress report for the BC Government.

Public Feedback Mechanism

The City strives towards building a place where all people feel welcomed and it is important that there is a mechanism for people to report barriers to accessibility. In response to the Accessible

British Columbia Act, a temporary public feedback mechanism was created on September 15, 2023. This mechanism allows community members to report an accessibility barrier in two ways:

- Community can report a barrier through the City of Vancouver's [website](#). The webpage provides a step-by-step guide for the community member and gives the option to attach photos of the barrier(s) to support their incident report.
- Community members can use the general call centre (311) to report a barrier. These options offer various ways to ensure the accessibility of receiving the feedback.

Between September 2023 and April 2024, the City received 124 reports of disability barriers. The majority of the cases are related to the built environment and public spaces, including:

- Trees and bushes needing to be trimmed because they are blocking the view of oncoming traffic.
- Hostile architecture (e.g., street furniture that assumes a person's size, or has a barrier on it making it difficult to sit or lay down on).
- Non-accessible physical infrastructure making it difficult for people with disabilities.
- Many sidewalks are not flat due to the tree roots cutting through the pavements, which results in lack of accessibility.

Issues reported are recorded and passed to respective departments to address the complaint. Cases are also analyzed and themed, for sharing with the Accessibility Committee as well as the respective departments to identify ways to prevent these barriers. This feedback mechanism allows the City to respond to community on an ongoing basis, and to communicate back with individuals reporting a problem once it is fixed. See [Appendix G](#) for a summary of data relating to reported accessibility barriers.

Currently, the City of Vancouver is looking at ways to improve the permanent public feedback mechanism to be more robust and to attend to the needs of the disabled community.

Continuous Learning

Accessibility is complex and an ever-learning journey which requires fostering a culture of vulnerability. Staff recommend three concrete ways that the City can continuously learn about accessibility: a community of practice; a public partners table; and, an online (internal) knowledge resource hub, as follows:

Community of Practice

An internal working group was established in Phase 1 and 2 of the Accessibility Strategy. This group will now morph into a community of practice. The intention behind this group is to keep the focus on accessibility across the organization, to learn from each other, and to share best practices. The Community of Practice will meet quarterly to discuss our learnings together for collaboration and opportunities to move accessibility forward.

Public Partners Table

During the community engagement, persons with disabilities voiced concerns around transportation, inaccessible medical services or education. Although, the City's jurisdiction is limited to its facilities, infrastructure, programs, and services, it can also play a role advocating to public partners. Focus area 8 of the MYAP highlights the City's role in advocating and working with other orders of government and agencies on accessibility issues.

Staff are exploring the possibility of establishing a public partners table that brings together local agencies, such as Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and Vancouver School Board (VSB), to share information and collaborate on accessibility issues. The proposed public partners table will encourage collaboration and when feasible coordination of work in the hopes of increasing accessibility for persons with disabilities in all areas around the City.

Knowledge Resource Hub (Internal)

Staff will develop an internal hub that will provide different resources for departments that are looking for ways to increase an accessibility lens to their work. These resources will be housed within the city's internal website. This will include things like funding opportunities, upcoming community events, accessibility stories, or tips on increasing accessibility when doing engagement, planning, developing policy, etc. The intention is to create a space for continuous learning for accessibility.

"Within the City, a strategy is needed for all the partnered municipal agencies, including VPD, VPL, Parks, Fire. So far none have accepted or adopted the City's Accessibility Strategy." ~ *Broader engagement participant, June 2023*

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: The Disability Population in BC and Canada

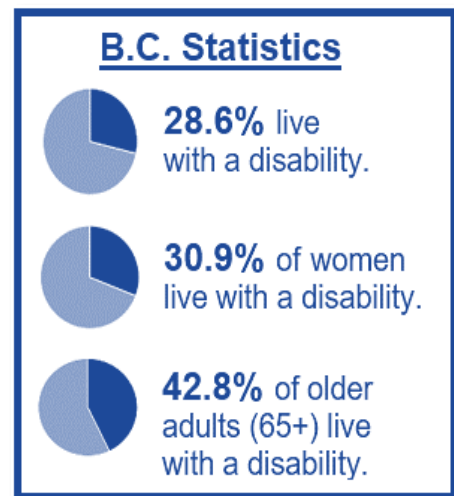
Globally, persons with disabilities are considered “the world’s largest minority”, making up an estimated 650 million people.¹ It is a minority group that almost everyone will be part of at some point in their lives, but not everyone experiences disabilities in the same way or to the same degree. The rate at which people are likely to experience ongoing disabilities increases with age: 45% of people aged 65 and older live with disabilities, compared to 16% of people aged 15 to 64.² However, in absolute numbers most people with disabilities are younger than age 65.

In 2022 the Canadian Survey on Disability³ reported that 27% of Canadians aged 15 and over had one more or more disability.⁴ This represents a 5% increase from 2017 with a similar pattern occurring again with women at a higher rate (30%) than men (24%) in 2022. Youth (aged 15 to 24) had the highest disability rate increase, from 13% in 2017 to 20% in 2022 across Canada.⁵ Adults (Aged 25-64) living with a disability represents 24.1% (4,640,800) of this age group, which is a 4.1% increase from 2017.⁶ Older adults (65+) living with a disability represent 40.4% (2,513,750) of this age group which is a 2.6% increase from 2017 across Canada.⁷

In British Columbia, in 2022 the Canadian Survey on Disability reported that 28.6% of the population aged 15 and over was living with a disability representing a 3.9% increase from 2017 when the rate was 24.7%.⁸ A similar pattern occurs again reflecting the national trends where women are at a higher rate (30.9% in 2022, an increase of 4.5%) than men (26.1% in 2022, an increase of 3.6%) in B.C. The youth rate (aged 15-24) went from 13.4% in 2017 to 19.7% in 2022 representing a 6.4% increase. Adults (Aged 25-64) living with a disability represents 25.5% (669,050) of this age group, which is a 3.5% increase from 2017. Older adults (65+) living with a disability represent 42.8% (383,940) of this age group which is a 1.2% increase from 2017 across British Columbia.⁹

People with disabilities will often experience poor socio-economic outcomes. For example, in 2023, the number of people on disability assistance rates (3.3%) were higher than income assistance rates (1.9%) in BC. This marks a

shift in trends where for the past 25 years income assistance rates have been the highest in the



¹ United Nations Enable, Fact Sheet on Persons with Disabilities. <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/toolaction/pwdfs.pdf>

² Statistics Canada, 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, accessed through Community Data Program.

³ The Canadian Survey on Disability purpose, “is to provide information about Canadian youth and adults whose everyday activities are limited due to a long-term condition or health-related problem.” [Surveys and statistical programs - Canadian Survey on Disability \(CSD\) \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231201/dq231201b-eng.htm)

⁴ Statistics, Canada, 2022. Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017 to 2022. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/231201/dq231201b-eng.htm>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Statistics Canada, 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, “Table 7: Disability status for persons aged 15 and over by age group and gender, Canada, provinces and territories, 2017 and 2022.” accessed through Community Data Program.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Statistics Canada, 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, “Table 7: Disability status for persons aged 15 and over by age group and gender, Canada, provinces and territories, 2017 and 2022.” accessed through Community Data Program.

⁹ Ibid.

province. Persons with disabilities are also overrepresented in core housing needs, especially those with severe or very severe disabilities.¹⁰

Understanding Disability in the City of Vancouver

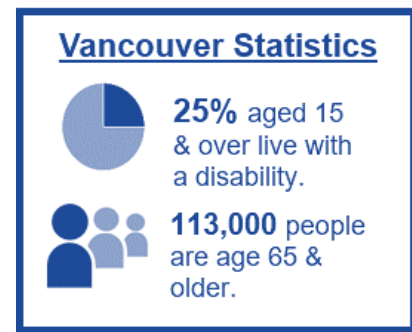
In Vancouver, as of 2022, 25% of persons aged 15 and over live with a disability, representing a 5% increase from 2017 and in line with the Metro Vancouver average.¹¹ By comparison, across Metro Vancouver, Port Moody has the lowest rate of people living with a disability, aged 15 and over, at 13%, while the Township of Langley has the highest rate at 36.1%.

According to the 2021 census, there were 113,000 people aged 65 and older in Vancouver.¹² This is a 16% increase since 2016, and five times the growth rate of people under age 65. As the city's population ages, the number of persons with disabilities will continue to increase.¹³ Nearly 20% of adults in the city rate their own mental health as fair or poor,¹⁴ and this number increased to 35% during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁵

The most frequently reported disabilities by people in Vancouver are related to pain, mobility, flexibility, sight, and mental health.³

It is evident that the rate of persons with disabilities within Vancouver is increasing and there is a growing need to create an accessible city which can benefit everyone. When we have a city striving to continuously become more accessible, we not only become more inclusive, but we provide greater equity and well-being for all.

In 2023-2024, around 12% of students enrolled in the Vancouver School District were designated as having disabilities. Overall students with diverse needs are more likely to experience barriers in completing education. In 2021-2022, 83% of Vancouver students with diverse needs completed their grade 12 diploma within six years of starting high school, compared to 95% of overall students.



¹⁰ Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation, 2018, "Research Insights: Housing Conditions of Persons with Disabilities."

¹¹ Statistics Canada, 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, "Disability status for persons aged 15 and over, Census Subdivision (CSD), 2022." accessed through Community Data Program.

¹² Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

¹³ Statistics Canada, 2016 and 2021 Annual Population Estimates by Age and Sex, accessed through Community Data Program.

¹⁴ Vancouver Coastal Health/Fraser Health, 2013/2014 My Health My Community Survey.

¹⁵ BC Centre for Disease Control, COVID SPEAK Survey, spring 2021.

APPENDIX B: New Key Area of Focus – Emergency Management & Climate Change

Following the adoption of the Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1) in 2022, ongoing engagement with the new Accessibility Community, Accessibility Task Force, working groups, and disability community members repeatedly identified concerns related to planning, preparedness, response and infrastructure for climate emergencies having impacts on advancing accessibility as a priority in the City of Vancouver.

Community members pointed out that, while there has been a concerted effort in ensuring that building entrances are accessible, there has been a limited consideration for safe evacuations during natural disasters or traumatic events. They pointed out that persons with disability often rely on emergency personnel to help them evacuate from a building. These concerns reflect how ableist cultures impact planning, emergency management and climate change responses. Another concern voiced was how emergency preparedness written materials do not include the perspectives of persons with disabilities. For example, illustrations and written information does not provide alternative options for persons with disabilities who are unable to do stairs or kneel under a table if there is an earthquake.

As Vancouver is increasingly experiencing extreme weather events, City responses include setting up cooling or warming centers to help mitigate the impact of climate change. However, people with disabilities are often unable to access these centers as the entrances are not accessible or do not have the appropriate supports in place, such as a health care provider or a hoist, which would make it possible for a person to stay for multiple days, if needed. Another concern identified was the lack of accessible transportation to access these centers. Further, many people with disabilities rely on public transportation and if it is not accessible, they cannot seek shelter.

In response, staff met with respective departments within the City to share the concerns related to emergency planning, preparedness and response in support of people with disabilities. A positive result of this process of collating engagement responses, validating internally and externally, and highlighting the unique context of advancing accessibility, is that Emergency Management and Climate Change was identified as a new Key Area of Focus in the Multi-Year Action Plan.

“Disaster and evacuation planning for disabled people needs to be better considered.”
~ *Broader engagement participant, June 2023*

“Climate change e.g., air quality, availability of air conditioning, degree of heat is also a factor. Some of these places get so hot that even when I’m visiting, I’m drenched in sweat. Aside from developers working on accessibility, we also need to look at it from a climate ready perspective – this indirectly affects people living with disabilities.” ~ *Broader engagement participant, June 2023*

APPENDIX C: Completed Actions (by Key Area of Focus)

This Appendix lists actions that have already been **completed** for each Key Area of Focus, as of June 2024.

FOCUS AREA 1		Built Environment and Public Spaces
COMPLETED		
Action(s):		Outcome(s):
1.1	Review Vancouver's Building By-law and Standards of Maintenance By-law to make sure that housing operators have plans and tools to repair broken elevators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed the Vancouver Building By-law and Standards of Maintenance By-law Section 9 on Building Elevators.
1.2	Develop checklists for building owners and residents on how to plan for elevators that need repairs or are out of service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided checklists to building owners and residents so that they know how to support their neighbours when the elevators are out of service.
1.3	Share information about elevator maintenance with industry and non-profit organizations about accessibility in the built environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided checklists to industry and non-profit organizations to increase their knowledge on evaluation repairs.
1.4	Develop an accessible version of the Zoning and Development By-law to meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA or higher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed an accessible version of the Zoning and Development By-law.
1.5	Continue to deliver Universal Inclusive Design and Accessibility Program (UIDAP) implementation for public-facing City-owned buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed accessibility audits for 31 City public facing buildings. Completed accessibility upgrades to washrooms and shower room at Gathering Place. Completed accessibility upgrades to fitness centre washrooms and change rooms and installation of adaptive and accessible fitness equipment at the West End Community Centre. Completed the main floor multi-stall washroom accessibility upgrades to increase safe access to washrooms at Carnegie Community Centre.
1.6	Train and certify two or more City staff in the Rick Hansen Foundation certification process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification training for 9 Facilities Planning and Development staff and 2 Development Building and Licencing staff.
1.7	Pilot building standards to a Gold Rick Hansen certification while renovating a City-owned building and report back on the outcomes and the viability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed accessibility renovations of the West Point Grey Vancouver Public Library branch while moving it to a leased space.

FOCUS AREA 2		Transportation Services, Policies and Programs
COMPLETED		
Action(s):		Outcome(s):
2.1	Adding new seating to bus stops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased the seating to bus stops in 2022-2023, approximately 70 new benches.
2.2	Reducing the accessibility barriers on sidewalks and pathways through city-wide programs and pedestrian upgrades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the curb ramp program, quadrupled the construction of the curb ramps allowing for over 800 new curb ramps which allowed the backlog of citizen requested ramps to be cleared. As part of the sidewalk rehab program, completed the city-wide sidewalk assessment survey of the City's approximately 2200 km of sidewalk which will help locate sidewalks that need to be replaced.

2.3	Update the accessible parking requirements to the Parking By-law for new developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amended the Parking By-law No. 6059 to add a van accessible definition and design standards. ▪ Updated the accessible spaces based on literature review and feedback from the accessible communities and research activities. ▪ Updated the Parking and Loading Design Supplement Bulletin to include van accessible design standards with the new by-law requirements for accessible spaces to rezoning and development applications received on January 1, 2023, and beyond.
2.4	Provide opportunities for rest at regular intervals by increasing the amount of seating available on and along sidewalks and other pedestrian paths.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Added approximately 180 seats City-wide in 2022-2023 which includes 70 new benches at bus stops.
2.5	Conduct accessibility audit of business' patios with a Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certified consultant and people with lived experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed an accessibility audit of 10 patios on public property that presented a wide range of accessibility challenges. ▪ Developed an understanding of key challenges and design considerations for people experiencing disabilities accessing and/or using curbside and sidewalk patios. ▪ Received a consultant report on audit findings, jurisdictional scan, and accessibility considerations for updates to patio program guidelines.

FOCUS AREA 3		Housing Policies, Programs and Design
COMPLETED		
Action(s):		Outcome(s):
3.1	Explore how to best enable accessible ground-level units in multiplexes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Made a change to the Zoning and Development By-law updates resulting in more ground floor units with no entry stairs and allow for units on a single level.

FOCUS AREA 4		Information and Communications
COMPLETED		
Action(s):		Outcome(s):
4.1	Add accessibility considerations to standardized communications templates and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporated alternative text on the City's website. ▪ Trained staff in Plain language training.
4.2	Advocate for plain language principles in all published print and digital/social content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updated the Content Style Guidelines for all Digital content on the City's website to include directives on plain language. ▪ Received annual training themes of accessibility and clear writing.
4.3	Conform the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Established a Request for Proposal (RFP) technical requirements on technology project to access the vendors' ability to meet W3C standards, platform, and feature customizability to ensure web accessibility, including Design Style Guide.
4.4	Create a Language Accessibility Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopted the Language Access Policy ▪ Offered two sessions for City Staff to learn about the Language Access Policy by Language Access Specialist.

FOCUS AREA 5		Employment
COMPLETED		
Action(s):		Outcome(s):
5.1	Create resources, tools, and opportunity for staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of accessibility issues within the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Created disability awareness course for staff. ▪ Advertise and provided course through the City's Justice, Equity, Decolonization, and Inclusion (JEDI) learning pathways.
5.2	Evaluate the City's recruitment processes and procedures to ensure they are equitable and inclusive for applicants with disabilities to access employment opportunities at the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provided updates to the City's Careers page to address accessibility barriers. ▪ Hosted focus groups with the Disabilities Employee Resource Group for feedback on recruitment experiences ▪ Attended four WorkSafeBC career fairs and a career expo for folks with disabilities. ▪ Reached out to community partners who support people with disabilities to inform about employment opportunities within the City's internal temp pool. ▪ Updated communication templates and created an accommodation process guide for the recruitment team to support candidates with disabilities through the recruitment process.
5.3	Review job postings to ensure employment equity and accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaged with the Disabilities Employee Resource Group for their feedback regarding the way job requirements are described to enhance accessibility and equity. ▪ Incorporated a statement on accommodations in all job postings to create safety and reduce stigma around requesting accommodations.
5.4	Deepen education and training on disability awareness for senior decision makers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provided two Disability Awareness Training to the City Leadership Team and Council.

FOCUS AREA 6		Governance and Engagement
COMPLETED		
Action(s):		Outcome(s):
6.1	Identify and respond to accessibility considerations during all aspects in engagement planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developed new engagement plans for specific communities during 2022 elections. ▪ Distributed a post-election survey that engaged with 3000+ Vancouver residents, both voters and non voters, to understand their election experience including issues of accessibility.
6.2	Consider multilingual closed captioning for engagement events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launched a pilot providing English closed captioning at some Council meetings.
6.3	Recognize the celebration of UN International Day for Persons with Disabilities on December 3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presented a proclamation to recognize the UN International Day for Persons with Disabilities.
6.4	Provide easy access to City services and information in a variety of languages through interpretation services via 3-1-1 call center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offered Language Line (a third-party interpreter service) to customers in over 170 languages.
6.5	Implement design principles to facilitate voter engagement in the electoral process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaged with People with Disabilities Advisory Committee and organizations that serve people with disabilities to better understand some of the barriers in past elections.
6.6	Review the criteria, dollar amounts and process/mechanism for distributing honorariums to mitigate accessibility barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developed a policy to process honorariums.

FOCUS AREA 7		Capacity and Collaboration
COMPLETED		
Action(s):		Outcome(s):
7.1	Apply an equity and accessibility lens to cultural grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hired a Cultural Equity & Accessibility Planner who supports the work of the Accessibility Strategy and the delivery of the Cultural Equity and Accessibility grants and acts as a liaison for community groups.
7.2	Apply an accessibility lens when developing the Commemoration Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convened two meetings with the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee which informed both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Commemoration Framework.

FOCUS AREA 8		Advocacy and Working with Other Orders of Government and Agencies
COMPLETED		
Action(s):		Outcome(s):
8.1	Ensure the City of Vancouver complies with the Accessible British Columbia Act.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convened an Accessibility Committee to oversee the development and implementation of the Multi-Year Action Plan. Developed a temporary public feedback mechanism that receives and processes accessibility barriers.
8.2	Pilot the Reduced Fare Transit Pilot study, providing free 1-zone transit passes to 100 individuals to better understand the impacts transit has on other social determinants of health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A memo was produced for Council in 2022 and it helped inform Transport 2050 planning and Vancouver Plan.

FOCUS AREA 9		Emergency Management and Climate Change [*NEW*]
COMPLETED		
Action(s):		Outcome(s):
9.1	Expand and deepen partnerships with organizations serving persons with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalized partnership with Praxis Spinal Cord Institute. Presented at AEBC Preparedness sessions through Blind Canadians on extreme weather preparedness.
9.2	Engage senior levels of government and related agencies on improving accessibility within emergency and disaster management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended and responded to Emergency and Disaster Management Act (legislation) to ensure that there are accessible and equitable supports for people with disabilities.
9.3	Participate in the Vancouver Abilities Expo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire and Service representative attended the Vancouver Abilities Expo in May 2024.
9.4	Raise awareness within the City Protective Services (Fire & Life Safety team) and external service vendors to ensure that the Accessibility Strategy is considered and implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked closely with the external service vendor to ensure a clear understanding of the City's accessibility vision and its delivery of services.

APPENDIX D: Acronyms and Abbreviations

The table below lists City department and division acronyms and abbreviations:

Department and Division Acronym	Department and Division Title
ACCS ACCS - CS ACCS - HHS ACCS - SPP	Arts, Culture & Community Services Arts, Culture & Community Services – Cultural Services Arts, Culture & Community Services – Housing & Homelessness Services Arts, Culture & Community Services – Social Policy & Projects
CMO CMO - CEC CMO - CCO CMO – CCO - ERP CMO – EO CMO - OCSO CMO – VHDO CMO – OCSO - VEMA	City Manager’s Office City Manager’s Office – Civic Engagement & Communications City Manager’s Office – City Clerk’s Office City Manager’s Office – City Clerk’s Office – External Relations Protocol City Manager’s Office – Equity Office City Manager’s Office – Office of the Chief Safety Officer City Manager’s Office – Vancouver Housing Development Office City Manager’s Office – Office of the Chief Safety Officer – Vancouver Emergency Management Agency
DBL	Development, Building & Licensing
ENG ENG - SA ENG – SWM ENG - T ENG - T- TIP	Engineering Engineering – Street Activities Engineering – Solid Waste Management Engineering – Transportation Engineering – Transportation – Transportation Integration Projects
FRSC FRSC - F	Finance, Risk & Supply Chain Finance, Risk & Supply Chain - Finance
HR	Human Resources
PDS PDS - HRP	Planning, (Urban) Design, & Sustainability Planning, (Urban) Design, & Sustainability – Housing Regulation & Policy
REFM REFM - FPD	Real Estate & Facilities Management Real Estate & Facilities Management – Facilities Planning & Development
TS TS – 311/DC	Technology Services Technology Services – 311/Digital Channels
VFRS VFRS – PE VFRS - T	Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services – Public Education Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services - Training

APPENDIX E: Annual Reporting Form



Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy

Phase 2: Multi-year Action Plan

Date:

Department:

Submitted By:

Reporting Period (e.g., June 2024 – June 2025):

Focus Area	Action	Project Lead	Progress to date/ Description of work completed	Estimated date of completion

APPENDIX F: 3-Year Departmental Action Reporting Form (Draft)



Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: City of Vancouver’s Accessibility Strategy **Phase 2: Multi-Year Action Plan**

Date:

Department:

Submitted By:

Reporting Period (e.g., June 2024 – June 2025):

Focus Area(s):

Action Completed? Yes No

Action	Work Performed toward the Action to date	Is there anything more needed for this action?	What are your Next Steps? Can they be addressed within existing resourcing? <i>(If action is not completed)</i>

APPENDIX G: Barriers to Accessibility Reporting Data

The table below provides a summary of the reports of barriers to accessibility received by the City since the temporary feedback mechanism was launched in September 2023 (i.e., Sept. 2023 – April 2024). Some of the cases received unfortunately had insufficient information for the City to proceed, or were not within the City jurisdiction; and, some were duplicate reports. There were five cases that were reviewed but no action was taken because the issues were out of scope for the City.

Status of Case	Count	Percentage
Resolved	68	54.8%
Open	29	23.4%
Unable to resolve - Insufficient info	8	6.5%
Not a city provided service / jurisdiction	8	6.5%
Duplicate	6	4.8%
Unable to resolve – Insufficient resources	5	4.0%
Total:	124	