

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

PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE



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WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Thank you for participating in this broader engagement for the continued development of the ***Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy!***

Your lived experience of disability will add to the development of the Accessibility Strategy – we value your stories and your voice throughout this process, so much gratitude to you all.

Phase 1 of the Accessibility Strategy is completed!

On July 19th, 2022, the City of Vancouver approved the ***Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1)!***

The Accessibility Strategy reflects our 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 strategy reinforces our recognition of the rights, dignity, and independence of people with disabilities within our communities. It strengthens our ability to foster a culture of equity and inclusion that values and includes all residents, visitors, and employees.

The overarching goals of ***Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: Accessibility Strategy*** are as follows:

- Build inclusive communities and provide accessible environments in which all individuals have equitable access to the City's services, programs and infrastructure.
- Build an inclusive and accessible work environment and culture, in which all departments will be 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, where possible.

Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy takes into consideration the multiple identities that intersect to make us who we are and how experiences differ depending on factors such as gender, disability, age, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender identity.

Definition of Persons with Disabilities

For the purposes of this strategy, we will use the term 'persons with disabilities' to reference the complexity and diversity of lived experiences as outlined above.

Persons with disabilities refers to those who experience physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related impairments whether they are seniors, others with age-related impairments, or people with lived experience of mental health concerns or substance use issues.

Development of the Strategy

Building an accessible city is a journey, thus, the City is developing the Accessibility Strategy in two phases.

Phase 1 of the strategy represents an initial step. It outlined some definitions, principles, and accessibility commitments, creating opportunities to challenge existing narratives of persons with disabilities. It is a call to confront stereotypes, assumptions, and ableism. This strategy advances the City's commitment to supporting the full participation of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities need to be seen, engaged, recognized, and valued in communities.

Phase 2 is to confirm priorities and to ensure that the strategy is comprehensive, reflecting the needs of the disability communities. In addition, the City will continue to work towards meeting the requirements of the Accessible BC Act which are to establish an Accessibility Committee and to establishing an ongoing monitoring and evaluation structure, including a public feedback process.

Our Current Work

The City is currently working on Phase 2 of the Strategy which includes:

- Working with departments to make a plan and timeline for working on Strategy actions
- Setting up the Accessibility Committee and tasks for the Committee
- Putting in place both internal and external ways to check and report on how the plan is going.
- Getting feedback from more people in the community.
- Creating the first multi-year action plan 2023-2026.
- Working with community organizations on projects that support the goals of the Strategy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

Both documents are written in plain language

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20220719/documents/A.pdf>
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20220719/documents/ra-appendix-plainlanguage.pdf#page=21>

If you require further information, please do reach out to Karen Lai, Accessibility Planner at 604.675-5926 or Karen.Lai@vancouver.ca

Statement of Accessibility Commitments

In November 3, 2021, the City Council endorsed five accessibility commitments. The foundation of these commitments is the principle of “Nothing about us without us...¹” a recognition that the City needs to make space and elevate the voices and leadership of persons with disabilities in community.

The City of Vancouver Commits to:	Description:
Respecting the rights, dignity and independence of persons with disabilities over the life course	<p>Because of ableist attitudes and behaviors, people with disabilities have often been treated as ‘less than’ those who are able bodied. To challenge these harmful attitudes, and in alignment with the BC Human Rights Code and the Accessible BC Act, efforts towards making the City more accessible start by respecting and upholding the rights, dignity and independence of people with disabilities.</p> <p>These efforts must take into account that disabilities can occur at any time in a person’s life and maximizing inclusion will require differing adaptations and interventions depending on age and circumstance.</p>
Fostering a safe environment where all people feel valued, included and a sense of belonging	<p>Many marginalized groups have pointed out that they do not experience the city as a safe place, and that they do not feel like they belong. Safety, both physical and psychological, and belonging are fundamental to building the accessible city envisioned, and thus, this is a core focus of the Accessible Strategy.</p>
Creating opportunities for persons with disabilities to be involved in decision-making and to participate fully in all aspects of city life	<p>An accessible city is one where everyone, and in particular, people with disabilities can fully participate in employment, entertainment, recreation, etc. Because they are the experts of their own lives and know what is best for their communities, it is important for people with disabilities to have opportunities to be at decision-making tables.</p>
Demonstrating how the knowledge and perspectives of persons with disabilities are integrated across all City processes, policies and decision-making	<p>As the City works to reflect the diversity of Vancouver’s population in its staff complement, attracting and retaining employees with disabilities is a critical part of this effort. Demonstrating how the views and perspectives of persons with disabilities are integrated in all City processes is an important step towards removing barriers and building trust between the City and disability communities.</p>
Listening to and addressing the needs of persons with	<p>The majority of society is designed mainly through the lenses of those who are able bodied. This means that many City</p>

¹ www.un.org/development/desa/international-day-persons-with-disabilities-3-december/international-day-of-disabled-persons-2004-nothing-about-us-without-us.html, December 2004

disabilities in City programs, services, and physical infrastructure

programs, services and physical infrastructure are not accessible to persons with disabilities. An inclusive and accessible City, is one that listens to and commits to addressing the needs of those who are most negatively impacted by its planning processes, policies, services and the built environment.

FORMAT OF THE ENGAGEMENT SESSION TOGETHER

TIME	ACTIVITY
3:30 – 4:00	Welcome and Check in
3:50 – 4:30	Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and Introduction
4:30 – 4:45	Trade Show Move Around Two questions to be answered at each booth: 1. Are there things that stand out for you in this area? 2. Are there other things you would like to see in this area?
4:45 – 5:20	Round 1: Join a Breakout Group
5:20 – 5:45	Break
5:40 – 6:05	Round 2: Join a Breakout Group
6:05 – 6:50	Trade Show Move Around Two questions to be answered at each booth: 1. Are there things that stand out for you in this area? 2. Are there other things you would like to see in this area?
6:30 – 6:55	Priority Exercise
6:55 – 7:00	Thank you and Close Questions and Answers

Two Questions that will be asked during the Breakout Groups

1. Are there things that stand out for you in this area?
2. Are there other things you would like to see in this area?

TRADESHOW BOOTHS

Two Questions to answer as you move through the Trade Show Booths

1. Are there things that stand out for you in this area?
2. Are there other things you would like to see in this area?

Focus Area 1: Built Environment and Public Spaces

Goal: The City will follow Universal Design Guidelines and a high level of accessibility guidelines. Everyone should be able to access all physical infrastructure in the city.

Our built environment includes:

- Public facilities and buildings.
- Arts, cultural, social, and recreational infrastructure.
- Commercial facilities.
- Public spaces such as parks, beaches, playgrounds and pedestrian pathways.

The City has been working on being more accessible for many years. We want to be a City that meets the needs of everyone's ability and age. The City has made accessibility guidelines for new construction. We are working to remove barriers to our built environment.

Community priorities include:

- Universal design principles to guiding City development.
- Construction policies that pass a high level of accessibility requirements.
- Ways for people to give advice on accessibility in building and public space plans.
- Persons with disabilities involved in accessibility planning, including permits, enforcement, and security.
- Accessibility checks of public spaces to find ways to improve safety and security for all.
- City functions to raise awareness about creating barrier-free and accessible spaces in the City.
- Wayfinding systems that meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Focus Area 2: Transportation Services, Policies and Programs

Goal: The City will use universal design principles for transportation planning. People should feel connected to their daily needs regardless of ability.

Transportation is important for persons with disabilities. Transportation challenges stop people from accessing their daily needs. An accessible transportation system helps everyone meet their daily needs. Persons with disabilities face many different mobility barriers. Transportation issues include transit options and our built environment. Solving transportation problems includes other cities, but there are ways the City can help transportation accessibility. The City

can advocate for local, provincial, and federal transportation changes.

The City's role in transportation includes:

- Building and maintaining City-owned public infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, bike routes, and public space.
- Guiding development on private property.
- Managing how streets get used.
- Advocacy and partnership with agencies outside the City's jurisdiction.

Community priorities include:

- Universal design principles guides transportation planning.
- Review wayfinding through an accessibility and intersectional lens.
- People are able to use mobility devices safely in the pedestrian environment.
- Check the security of transit spaces using an intersectional lens to make them more accessible.
- Education for everyone working and using transit, ride-hailing, and mobility support systems.
- Persons with disabilities who are driving are able to safely park and load close to where they need to go.

Focus Area 3: Housing Policies, Programs and Design

Goal: Accessible, affordable, social, and supportive housing is available for persons with disabilities.

Access to secure and affordable housing is important for health and well-being. Having choice and control of living spaces is an important part of being independent. Accessible housing is affordable and welcoming and provides independence. It meets the physical needs of persons with disabilities. Having accessible housing in all neighborhoods supports diversity and inclusion. It helps people connect with their community and build a life they choose.

There are unique types of homelessness for persons with disabilities, such as:

- Persons using a mobility device living in an inaccessible home
- Persons dwelling in a living room and not being able to access the bathroom and/or shower
- Persons not able to use the kitchen because it is not accessible
- Persons having to crawl on the floor through narrow corridors to access the toilet

The City of Vancouver is trying to make housing affordable and accessible. We want to provide more social and supportive housing. We want housing to meet the needs of our residents with accessibility challenges. Making sure persons with disabilities have accessible housing is challenging for the City. Intersecting identities such as race and gender add to this challenge. The City wants programs and projects to help people who are at risk of homelessness

Community priorities include:

- Universal design principles guide housing design and policy in the City.
- Have more supportive housing programs for persons with disabilities, like the "Right Fit" program.
- Raise income assistance levels for shelter and have more rental supplements for persons with disabilities.

- Give accessible units and public housing to those in greatest need.
- Work with developers so accessibility is part of all housing developments.
- Support adaptations to make people's current homes more accessible. Make income-assistance programs available to more people with disabilities.
- Make emergency shelters more accessible.
- Have more temporary transitional housing options for persons with disabilities who want permanent homes.

Focus Area 4: Information and Communication

Goal: The City of Vancouver offers residents accessible communication and communication supports.

Communication is how we share information with each other. The information we share and the technology we use needs to be accessible. Some people have barriers to getting information from the City. This makes it hard for people to give input into City decision-making. Accessible communication is about giving information in many formats. We need to think about the many aspects of disabilities, including physical, mental, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related disabilities. We want people to feel included and understand City communications.

Community priorities include:

- Teach people about accessibility laws and what persons with disabilities and other groups experience.
- Support organizations to make their meetings or events accessible to all people.
- Get information in many accessible ways, formats, and languages.
- Have in-person communication options for persons with disabilities.
- Make standards used by all City groups for accessible communication.

Focus Area 5: Employment

Goal: An inclusive and accessible workplace for all in the City of Vancouver, including more ways for persons with disabilities to contribute to the workforce.

Accessible employment is about not leaving persons with disabilities out of the hiring process. This includes recruitment, accommodation, retention, training, and promotion of employees. Accessible employment helps employees and employers. Working helps people have independence. Accessible employment can lead to better well-being. Valuing employees with disabilities leads to lower turnover and a better work environment. We want an environment that is accessible and inclusive for all employees. The Human Resources (HR) department supports City staff with employee and labour relations. This includes compensation, benefits, health, and safety. Over the past few years, diversity and inclusion have been the main focus of HR at the City.

Community priorities include:

- Regular training for City staff about accessibility needs.
- Check on the City's hiring processes and make changes as needed.
- Hire people with a wide range of disabilities who feel supported to do their duties.
- All people who hire and supervise others need to have a strong knowledge of workplace accommodations and access needs.

- Support career growth and mentorship for employees with disabilities.

Focus Area 6: Governance and Engagement

Goal: Make sure there is fair access to municipal programs and services in the City of Vancouver.

The City of Vancouver wants people to take part in local government programs, services, information, bylaws, and public decision-making. Voting accessibility is an important way this happens. Persons with disabilities need to be included in municipal elections.

Community priorities include:

- People with a range of experiences and different types of disabilities are making accessibility standards for the City.
- Make customer services standards and provide training for staff serving persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.
- Use an intersectional accessibility lens.
- Raise public awareness about accessible services in the City of Vancouver.
- Make accessibility information available when people buy goods, services, or facilities.
- Use the same accessibility policies across city services and programs

Focus Area 7: Capacity and Collaboration

Goal: Talk about accessibility challenges in the community with non-profit organizations and persons with disabilities so we can get more done together.

Changing the systems for persons with disabilities takes working with our community partners. We need to listen to community groups that support persons with disabilities and groups that are run by persons with disabilities. The experiences and voices of the disability community need to be heard. Community groups that serve vulnerable populations need resources. This is the best way to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, seniors, and those who experience mental health or substance use-related disabilities. Service providers can better help people when they have flexibility and resources. The City of Vancouver supports non-profit organizations with grants, capital projects, rent subsidies, and capacity support.

Community priorities include:

- Give core funding to organizations working with persons with disabilities, seniors, and those with lived experience of mental health challenges.
- Fund networks that bring together community groups and persons with disabilities.
- Respect the leadership and participation of the disability community.
- Work with community partners to make sure the rights and needs of persons with disabilities are a main part of City planning.
- Promote accessibility standards in the community.
- Support volunteer and mentorship programs within the City and community organizations.
- Advocate for the rights of people living with disabilities including seniors and people with lived experience of mental health and substance use-related disabilities.

Focus Area 8: Advocacy and Working with other Orders of Government along with Other Agencies

Goal: Work with all levels of government so persons with disabilities can move, lead, and take part in their communities.

Accessibility is a priority for all levels of government. Governments need to work with the disability community to decrease access barriers and solve problems. Issues with housing, public spaces, social assistance, education, health, and transportation mean all levels of government need to work together. We need to work with partner institutions such as Vancouver Coastal Health, TransLink, Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), and BC Housing, and other cities. The City also needs to work with Civic boards such as the Vancouver Police Department, the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and the Vancouver Public Library.

Community priorities include:

- Make it so everybody is part of making accessibility and inclusion better.
- Share what we learn with other levels of government and community partners.
- Work with the disability community to make changes with the federal, provincial, and regional governments.

ADDITIONAL BOOTH

A booth will be placed as the “9th” booth, which will be similar to a “miscellaneous booth”. It will have three activities that you can do. It will be manned by a facilitator and a note taker.

Activity 1:

There will be a sign outlining all of the 8 focus areas:

Focus Area 1: Built Environment and Public Spaces

Focus Area 2: Transportation Services, Policies and Programs

Focus Area 3: Housing Policies, Programs and Design

Focus Area 4: Information and Communication

Focus Area 5: Employment

Focus Area 6: Governance and Engagement

Focus Area 7: Capacity and Collaboration

Focus Area 8: Advocacy and Working with other Orders of Government along with Other Agencies

Question to be asked by the facilitator:

Are we missing any other focus areas?

Activity 2: Prioritization Exercise

You will need to answer the question asked by the facilitator: What are the most important aspects of accessibility to you?

Activity 3: Parking lot

There will be blank sheets of flipchart paper. You can write down things that are on your mind that was not addressed in this engagement session. As well, you can ask for support from the note taker to help you write down your thoughts. Some one will follow up with you to make sure it gets addressed.

Tips for Participation

What you have to say is very important! There will be a facilitator and a note taker at every booth and in the two break out groups.

Here are a few other suggestions that may help you prepare to engage more fully and confidently during the engagement session:

- Spend some time reading and reflecting on the Quick Overview of ***Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy***
- Check out the following link to the City of Vancouver's website <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/accessible-city.aspx> to learn more about what the City is currently doing to support accessibility.
- Feel free to bring a support person.
- Basic accommodations will be offered at the targeted dialogue sessions including:
 - ASL interpretation
 - Large text on the PowerPoint slides
 - Color contrast on the PowerPoint slides
 - Plain language on all written materials
 - It will be a scent-free environment

Should you require further accommodations to support you to participate, please let us know in advance of the event.

- To encourage full participation in the engagement, please remember to:
 - Come with an open and curious mind
 - Listen actively to each other.
 - Let everyone have a chance to express their point of view.
 - Listen respectfully to each other's perspectives
 - Keep your stories short and to the point, as best as possible.
 - If you have something you would like to discuss that is a personal matter, please reach out to the facilitator after the session.
- There will be flipchart paper titled "parking lot" on the wall. Feel free to use this space to write things down you feel are important to consider if we didn't bring it up during the conversation. If time allows, we will discuss it and if not, City staff will get back to you after the session. Sticky notes are also provided for you to write on, if you wish.

Quick Overview: Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy (Phase 1)

In September 2018, Vancouver City Council asked staff to making an accessibility strategy. Phase 1 of the City of Vancouver's Accessibility Strategy is an important way we are making the city more accessible and inclusive.

Accessibility is defined as “the absence of barriers that prevent individuals and/or groups from participating, contributing and benefiting in all aspects of society. The term accessibility is complex. Accessibility means different things to different people. People do not have to be from the disability community to experience inaccessibility. For the purposes of this Strategy, we mean accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Community members and stakeholders who have given feedback for the Accessibility Strategy are:

- Residents with disabilities
- Self-Advocates
- Families and caregivers of people with disabilities
- Service providers and support workers
- Community organizers
- Organizations serving people with disabilities
- Allies and leaders of the disability community
- The City's Accessibility Task Force
- The City's Internal Staff Working Group
- Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC)
- Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC)
- The PDAC and SAC Council Advisory Committees
- People with Lived Experience Advisory on Mental Health and Substance Use

We understand ableism is very real and very much a part of our society and everyday language. Ableism is a form of prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities. We need to stop ableism to be more inclusive.

The Accessibility Strategy follows federal and provincial law:

- *UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* ([link](#))
- *Canadian Human Rights Act* ([link](#))
- *Accessible Canada Act* ([link](#))
- *Accessible BC Act* ([link](#))
- *BC Human Rights Code* ([link](#))

We want the Accessibility Strategy to:

- Teach city staff how people with disabilities experience the city.
- Help staff better identify and stop ableism.

- Change ableist city practices.
- Ensure people with disabilities feel included in city life and public matters.
- Make city policies and services accessible.
- Help identify and remove systemic barriers that are part of our systems.
- Lead to more education and awareness about disability and accessibility.
- Lead to increased services for people with disabilities.
- Create a welcoming City and workplace for persons with disabilities.

We want the Accessibility Strategy to offer:

- Definitions and accessibility commitments.
- Ways for improving accessibility within the City and the community.
- A starting point for change that must happen over time.
- An accessibility lens for City planning.
- Ways to track accessibility in City policies and services.
- Feedback on work and action plans.

The Strategy emphasizes eight focus areas made by the Accessibility Task Force. The Areas of Focus were confirmed by people during community engagement sessions and align with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. The 8th area of focus is about working together with other groups for accessibility in our community.

8 Areas of Focus and Accessibility Goals:

Focus Area 1: Built Environment and Public Spaces

Goal: Remove physical barriers related to: housing, transportation, public buildings, facilities and spaces, and commercial and institutional spaces.

Focus Area 2: Transportation Services, Policies and Programs

Goal: Apply universal design principles to guide transportation planning and design, to connect people to their daily needs.

Focus Area 3: Housing Services, Programs, and Design

Goal: Make accessible, affordable, social, and supportive housing for persons with disabilities.

Focus Area 4: Information and Communication

Goal: Connect and engage with persons with disabilities by providing communication supports, accessible websites, formats and digital content.

Focus Area 5: Employment

Goal: Support a diverse and inclusive workplace for all.

Focus Area 6: Governance and Engagement

Goal: Reduce barriers to participation in civic life using an accessibility lens.

Focus Area 7: Capacity and Collaboration

Goal: Talk about accessibility challenges in the community with non-profit organizations and persons with disabilities so we can get more done together.

Focus Area 8: Advocacy and Working with other Orders of Government, along with other Agencies

Goal: Work with all levels of government so persons with disabilities can move, lead, and take part in their communities.

It is important to check on actions set by City departments for the 8 Focus Areas. The Strategy suggests an accountability framework. This means making a plan for testing how the City is meeting its accessibility goals.

The framework includes:

- Guiding principles.
- Ways to check timelines and reporting.
- Transparency and honesty around Strategy work.
- Follow through on the goals set by City departments.

The Accessibility Strategy needs ongoing community engagement from diverse voices of persons with disabilities. It is important that community engagement is a big part of making the Strategy.

So far we have:

- Worked with disability organizations to help us understand the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Invited people not always included to take part.
- Hosted focus groups
- Reviewed 7 years of meeting minutes from two Council Advisory Committees: the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and the Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC). Both committees have advocated on many accessibility-related issues over many years.

The community suggested 4 ways to help make the Accessibility Strategy work:

1. Education and Awareness:

- The City needs to lead the way with education and awareness about accessibility. The City's Accessibility Strategy aims to include persons with disabilities as valued members of our community. The Strategy gives a plan for the City to improve its accessibility culture.

2. Intersectionality:

- Intersectionality means people can be discriminated against for more than one thing. Persons with disabilities are diverse in their disabilities, gender,

race, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, immigration status, and more.

- It is important to understand the intersectional experiences of persons with disabilities. This makes accessibility better for all. It is clear that there is no “one size fits all” approach to creating an accessible City. An intersectional approach is a more inclusive. We need to make space for all our residents.

3. Social Inclusion:

- Social inclusion is about stopping social isolation. People need to be able to choose where to go, what to do, where to work, and be able to take part in community. Social inclusion means people have the right to freely move in the community. To join, lead, and contribute on their own terms.
- People who shared experiences for the Accessibility Strategy said they needed social connection in their lives. Persons with disabilities want to feel valued as fellow community members. But our physical infrastructure and systems are not accessible. Negative attitudes about disability make it hard for persons with disabilities to make friends or take part in community. Accessibility barriers happen because of ableism. But everyone should feel like they belong. Stopping ableism and promoting inclusion is important work.

4. Racial Justice:

- Accessibility cannot get better by focusing on only one group of people. Many persons with disabilities also face racial injustice. People who shared experiences about racial injustice for the Accessibility Strategy said they had accessibility barriers because of ableism and racism.
- Ableism and racism are both forms of discrimination coming from colonial ideals of white supremacy. There are different experiences for white and racialized persons with disabilities. Ableism and racism are part of the same system. Knowing this makes it important we address discrimination and racism. This is part solving accessibility challenges in our community.

The Accessibility Strategy can help the City be more accessible for people living with disabilities. To make this happen we need to understand ableism connected to settler colonialism and capitalism. Disability is a part of identity that is the main focus for this Strategy. Persons with disabilities are often discriminated against in other ways, too. Including sexism, ageism, racism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia, and more.

Phase 1 of the Strategy includes what we have started doing with the 8 Focus Areas and department action items:

- Gathering community feedback.
- Making priorities.
- Developing a strategy.
- Having an accountability framework.

Phase 2 of the Strategy will include:

- More public engagement.
- Making a multi-year action plan.
- Monitoring the departmental actions.
- Establishing the Accessibility Committee.
- Setting ways for the public to give feedback on accessibility.

Transforming Attitudes, Embedding Change: A City of Vancouver Accessibility Strategy is our journey to making a city where all people feel valued, respected, and openly welcomed.

The work of making the City's Accessibility Strategy is part of the "Healthy City Strategy". The Healthy City Strategy is about creating better conditions for the well-being of all our residents.

Compliance with Provincial Regulation

The Accessible British Columbia Act (2021) requires that all prescribed organizations, including all municipalities, create:

- An accessibility plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization
- An accessibility committee to assist the organization in identifying barriers and advise the organization on how to remove and prevent barriers
- A public feedback mechanism for receiving comments from the public on the plan and barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization

THE ROLE OF THE CITY

Municipal Government is the level of government that is closest to local people. Municipal governments are responsible for everyday things that make a city run (like what gets built where, water and sewers, garbage pickup and street cleaning).

There are also many aspects of daily life where the responsibilities are shared between different levels of government like housing, transportation, environmental protection and more.

The City of Vancouver has its own piece of legislation, the Vancouver Charter. This contains a set of rules that the City must follow. These rules outline how the City operates, and what bylaws the City Council can create, and how the budgets are set. It also has some special powers that are related to building code, permits, liability, and planning, electing a Park Board, and rules around how the City can borrow money when need.

The City of Vancouver has a number of departments such as Engineering, Planning and Arts and Culture. We also work in partnership with the Vancouver Library Board, Vancouver Police Board and Board of Parks and Recreation.

There are two important categories of people who work in municipal governments: elected officials and staff:

- Elected Officials (including the Mayor, Councillors, and in some places Park Board Commissioners) are elected by voters every four years. The City of Vancouver City Council is made up of one Mayor and ten City Councillors, while the Board of Parks and Recreation is made up of seven Park Board Commissioners. These elected officials make important decisions on how the City is run, and provide staff with guidance on which projects to work on.
- Municipal Staff are the people who make the city work. They are city planners, engineers, lawyers, emergency services personnel, community centre staff, and so much more.

The City of Vancouver has a lot of responsibilities such as:

- Water (including taps, fire hydrants, pipes and the supply to pools, fountains, etc.)
- Sewage and drainage
- Garbage and recycling
- Parks and public playgrounds (maintenance and construction)
- Community and Recreation Centres, and Libraries
- City Hall and other city or civic buildings
- Trees on public property
- Speed limits on city streets, including school and park zones (guided by Provincial laws)
- Street maintenance
- Street cleaning
- Sidewalks
- Bike lanes and greenways
- Parking (including restrictions and fees)
- Public transportation (shared with Provincial) including buses, Skytrain and Seabus
- Electricity and phone lines (shared with Provincial)
- Fire fighting
- Policing (Vancouver has it's own Police Board, but not all municipalities)

- Building code or the way buildings, windows doors, stairs, walls etc. are built (in Vancouver only)
- Zoning and permitting (deciding what kinds of things get built where), like how big yards are, how tall and wide buildings are, or where houses are vs. where businesses, and services are
- Business licences

For more information, please visit the City's website at: www.vancouver.ca

KEY MESSAGES OF THE ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGY

Respecting the Rights, Dignity and Independence of Persons with Disabilities

The commitment within the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) reinforces the responsibility of the City to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Creating an Environment where all People feel Valued, Respected, and Openly Welcomed

The City aims to strengthen its ability to create a culture of equity and inclusion, one that values and includes all employees, residents and visitors, including persons with disabilities, seniors and other inequitably treated groups. This Strategy focuses on identifying, preventing and removing barriers to full participation in the community means making improvements for all.

Establishing an Environment for Equitable Access and Opportunity to Participate

Persons with disabilities have traditionally not been included in planning and designing of municipal service delivery processes. People with disabilities need to be a part of decision-making process along with having the opportunity to participate in the planning, designing of municipal policies and service delivery procedures.

Fostering a Culture of Inclusion with an Accessibility Lens within the City

Inclusion is about a shift in our way of thinking. It comes from a place of not knowing, asking questions, challenging and questioning our own assumptions, and our unconscious biases, while implementing a sense of curiosity. The City is encouraging all departments, as well as its employees to instill this way of thinking with an accessibility lens to ensure that equity is embedded in the operating practices, programs and services of every department in the City.

Recognizing that Individuals have Complex Identities

The City wants to maintain a broad definition of disability as it is part of the equity and inclusion efforts that contribute to improved social health and well-being. As part of this, the City acknowledges that people have multiple and diverse layers to their identities that influences their perspectives and experiences. In addition, these different layers of identities may intersect with each other and therefore this needs to be considered when addressing inequality and barriers to inclusion.

Aligning the City with the Federal and Provincial Accessibility Legislation

In 2019, the federal legislation (*Accessible Canada Act*) was passed and work began on the BC Accessibility Legislation, which was proposed for Fall 2020. With the COVID pandemic, it delayed the introduction of the BC Accessibility Legislation to the Spring of 2021. It is anticipated that the BC Accessibility Legislation will mandate that municipalities align their own policies and procedures with the Provincial accessibility standards and the principles of the Federal legislation.