Accessibility Strategy

JUNE 2021

CITY OF VANCOUVER



The City of Vancouver is developing an overarching, long-term Accessibility Strategy. Accessibility is about being able to reach, understand, contribute to and use the places, information and services in our city.

This Accessibility Strategy reinforces the City's recognition of the rights, dignity, and independence of people with disabilities within our community and 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.

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

The proposed Strategy also strengthens the City's ability to foster a culture of equity and inclusion that values and includes all residents, visitors and employees.

Key Messages

The proposed Accessibility Strategy will reflect and reinforces the City's commitment to:

- Respecting the rights, dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Creating an environment where all people feel valued, respected, and openly welcomed.
- Ensuring equitable access and opportunity to participate in the planning, and designing of municipal policies programs, and service delivery.
- Fostering a culture of equity and inclusion for all residents, visitors and employees, including persons with disabilities seniors, and other inequitably treated groups.
- Demonstrating the City's commitment to embedding an accessibility lens in all daily operating practices of every department.
- Valuing and incorporating the knowledge and perspectives of persons with lived experience.
- Recognizing that individuals have complex identities that influences their perspectives and experiences. The barriers to inclusion may be a result of different layers of identities that intersect with one another.
- Aligning the City's Strategy with both the Federal and Provincial accessibility legislation.

Accessibility Strategy *continued*

The Process

The City plans to have the Accessibility Strategy in place by spring 2022. The first step, Phase 1 will be to develop a draft strategy by fall 2021, which sets out key definitions, principles, areas of focus, and outlines future phases of this work, including recommendations for broader engagement and the development of a multi-year action plan.

The engagement of other civic agencies in the process will be sought, including Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, Vancouver Police Department and Vancouver Public Library, with a goal of developing an Accessibility Strategy that can be endorsed by all civic organizations.

The Accessibility Strategy is being developed in tandem with the Equity Framework and the Healthy City Strategy and will align with the Vancouver Plan and the City of Reconciliation Framework.

Community Engagement

To help create the draft strategy, the City is hosting a series of conversations with persons with lived experience of disability, family members, community organizations providing services and City staff—we want to hear the diverse perspectives. The second step will to hear more voices through broader public engagement on the draft strategy and then put the plan into action.

Accessibility Task Force

City Council created an Accessibility Task Force to support and guide the work of this strategy. Current members are drawn from the City's Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and the Seniors' Advisory Committee. The Accessibility Task Force works in partnership with City Staff and have been meeting regularly since the beginning of 2020.

For More Information

Accessibility Task Force:
vancouver.ca/people-programs/accessibility-task-force.aspx

City of Vancouver and Accessibility:
vancouver.ca/people-programs/accessible-city.aspx
accessibilitystrategy@vancouver.ca
or visit
vancouver.ca/people-programs/accessible-city.aspx#happening

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