

## City of Colwood Corporate Accessibility Plan

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### About the City of Colwood



The City of Colwood is a charming seaside community located on the southern coast of Vancouver Island. The City of Colwood sits on the ancestral lands of the Teechamista and the Lekwungen-speaking people of the Songhees and

Xwsepsum Nations. We are honoured to have the opportunity to build strong working relationships with the local First Nations based on learning, openness, humility and respect. We endeavor to walk and roll softly on these ancestral lands of the Xwsepsum and Songhees families.

Colwood is rapidly growing, with a current population of approximately 22,000 people as of 2024 and offers multiple recreational programs and facilities. Boasting over 7 kilometers of oceanfront including beautiful beaches, parks and trails, Colwood fosters a strong sense of community, with many residents actively participating in local events and volunteer opportunities. Renowned for its friendly atmosphere, rich heritage, and connection to nature, Colwood is a wonderful place to live and visit.

## Message from the Chief Administrative Officer

On behalf of the Corporation of the City of Colwood, we are pleased to introduce our new Accessibility Plan, a testament to our commitment to accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion. We believe our community's strength lies in embracing and celebrating all residents. Colwood's greatest asset is our diverse community, enriched by various experiences, backgrounds, abilities and perspectives.



*Jason Johnson  
Chief Administrative Officer*

Our goal is to exceed legislative requirements reflecting our dedication to creating an accessible, inclusive and welcoming environment where individuals of all ages and abilities can fully participate. We invite each of you to join us on this journey to build a strong, inclusive community where everyone belongs.

The Capital West Accessibility Committee, comprising Colwood, Esquimalt, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, Sooke, and View Royal, has developed a joint Accessibility Plan to improve accessibility across the region. Our regional approach aims to enhance inclusivity and accessibility for everyone, including people with disabilities, marginalized groups and people experiencing barriers in our community.

This collaborative effort fosters resource sharing, cooperation and avoids duplication of work, ensuring each municipality's unique needs and vision are addressed.

I would like to thank the members of the Capital West Accessibility Committee and all the residents who contributed their insights and feedback. This Accessibility Plan is just the beginning. We are committed

to continuously improving and adapting to meet the evolving needs of our community.

### **Message from Human Resources (HR) Department**

The Human Resources Department plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of the City of Colwood’s Corporate Accessibility Plan. The HR team is actively participating in the development and execution of the Plan to ensure we are fostering an equitable and inclusive workplace culture. This includes ensuring that all employees, regardless of their abilities, have access to the necessary resources and support to succeed in their roles. The Plan emphasizes the importance of improving employment standards and service delivery through an accessibility lens.

The Human Resources department is responsible for developing, promoting and enforcing policies that foster equity, inclusivity and accessibility. This includes providing training for staff on disability awareness and accommodation, as well as ensuring feedback mechanisms are in place to continuously improve accessibility initiatives. By prioritizing accessibility in our policies and practices, HR can help ensure that individuals with disabilities are not only hired but also retained and given opportunities for advancement within the organization. This commitment to accessibility not only benefits employees with disabilities but also enhances the overall equity, diversity and inclusivity of the workplace, leading to a richer, more productive and engaging workplace community.

### **Accessibility Plan alignment with Strategic Plan**

Colwood’s 2024-2027 Strategic Plan sets out improvements through pathways that Colwood would like to see meaningful progress as we strive to make Colwood ever-more welcoming, inclusive and culturally

engaging for both its employees and the programs and services offered by the City.

**Engagement** - The City of Colwood has developed various strategies to enhance engagement, promoting social inclusion and equity. These strategies include offering multiple community engagement options, such as citizen committees, surveys, town halls, events, and accessible website features for providing feedback on the City's programs and services.

**Well-being** - Colwood enhances the health, well-being, and quality of life for its employees and residents through advocacy, regulation, and proactive initiatives. The City supports access to housing and healthcare, promotes safety and accessibility, and provides recreational options. Opportunities for seniors and youth are created to foster social connections and wellness, while also supporting community groups and food security initiatives.

**Infrastructure** - Colwood works to enhance quality of life for Colwood residents and visitors by creating a connected network of accessible streets, sidewalks, trails and cycling routes that allow people of all ages and abilities to move safely and conveniently throughout the City.

**Governance** – Colwood engages citizens in the governance of The City through clear, honest communications, transparent decision making and through accessible engagement. We are committed to exceptional customer service and ensuring the efficient and effective delivery of services.

**Economy** – Colwood makes decisions that promote the prosperity of residents, businesses, and The City as a whole. Colwood promotes economic drivers that encourage local business and investment. A variety of businesses can significantly increase accessibility in several ways:

- Physical Accessibility – more opportunities to create spaces that are accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities.
- Economic Accessibility – increased competition among businesses can lead to lower prices and more affordable options for consumers, making goods and services more accessible.
- Service Variety – businesses could offer a wider range of products and services, catering to diverse needs and preferences.
- Employment Opportunities – creation of more job opportunities, including positions that can be tailored to individuals with disabilities.
- Technological Advancements – adoption of new technologies that enhance accessibility such as accessible digital platforms.

Businesses that focus on accessibility contribute to a more inclusive society.

**Environment** – Colwood values our ecosystems and natural assets, which includes trees and the urban forest, ecosystem-services such as natural stormwater systems, and unique landscapes including hillsides and shorelines. Accessible initiatives include:

- **Sustainable Building Practices** - Implementing green building standards, such as LEED certification, ensures that new and renovated buildings are both accessible and environmentally friendly.
- **Public Transportation Enhancements:** Improving the accessibility of public transportation such as bike lanes and sidewalks can reduce the reliance on personal vehicles,

leading to lower emissions and less traffic congestion. Increased transportation options encourage and support more people to use these services, which are beneficial for the environment

- **Inclusive Outdoor Spaces:** Creating accessible parks and recreational areas promotes the use of green spaces and community well-being. This can include installing accessible pathways, benches, and facilities that encourage all community members to enjoy and care for natural environments.
- **Waste Reduction Programs:** Accessibility plans can include initiatives to reduce waste, such as recycling programs at city events and the use of digital documents instead of paper. These efforts help minimize the environmental impact of business operation.
- **Green Procurement Policies:** Adopting procurement policies that prioritize environmentally friendly products and services ensures that accessibility improvements are made sustainably. This can include purchasing recycled materials, energy-efficient equipment, and eco-friendly office supplies
- **Natural Climate Solutions:** Efforts such as improving biodiversity, ecosystems and tree cover provide many benefits, including ecosystem-services such as cooling during longer, hotter periods (reduce heat island effect) and mitigating the impacts of extreme weather. These initiatives not only contribute to environment but will also support accessibility throughout the City.

Colwood's Accessibility Plan can contribute to a healthier environment while promoting inclusivity and accessibility for all.

### **Accessibility History in Colwood**

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In 1989 the City of Colwood established a select committee charged by Council to advise them on issues affecting people with disabilities. Its objective was to make The City more livable by removing physical and social barriers allowing full participation in city life. The design of Colwood City Hall prioritized the needs of persons with disabilities by creating a universally accessible, single-story building at ground level. This includes accessible hallways, washrooms, and parking areas. In 1993 the Committee expanded to include neighbouring municipalities and rebranded as the Intermunicipal Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (IACDI). The City of Colwood had provided support to the Committee by providing administrative support and funding.

Past accomplishments of the City of Colwood and IACDI include the following:

- Annual IACDI picnics to foster community engagement and inclusive environment
- Development of the Guide to User Friendly Trails in partnership with CRD Regional Parks and West Shore Parks and Recreation to create accessible trails for people of all abilities
- Measuring Up Grant – Creation of accessibility art space at the Esquimalt Lagoon

In addition, IADCI promoted initiatives that fostered active living and the full participation of people with disabilities in their community. These included providing information and advocacy, providing feedback on accessibility issues, and hosting community events to ensure people with disabilities stay connected.

In 2024, IACDI became a society and was renamed to Access West Shore Society (AWSS). The purpose of the society is to advise municipalities of the Capital Regional District of the need to establish, develop, and maintain equitable policies, services, and facilities for persons with disabilities, including, but not limited to transportation, housing,

employment, education, and recreation. AWSS also works to identify barriers to services and facilities encountered by people with disabilities and collaborate with local governments and other community organizations to address them.

**Services provided by the City of Colwood include the following:**

- **Administration and Corporate Services** – Processing and Issuing business licensing, facility rentals, cemetery administration, policy development, information requests, record management, public notices, Council & Committee meetings, and front counter services.
- **Building Permits and Inspections** – Issuing building permits and conducting inspections to ensure safety and efficiency.
- **Bylaw Services** – Enforcement of Bylaws to ensure community safety and quality of life.
- **Communication and Engagement** – promoting well-being and social connections, event planning, volunteer coordination, city website, community engagement, media relations.
- **Community Planning** - Long-range planning and policy; heritage conservation; arts, culture and recreation planning; environmental sustainability; and economic prosperity.
- **Development Services** – Align development with the policies and objectives contained in the Official Community Plan and land use regulations through the review of subdivision, Official Community Plan amendments, rezoning, tree management, sign, temporary use, development variance and development permits.
- **Engineering** - Ensures sustainable infrastructure by managing public projects and collaborating with stakeholders. They optimize traffic flow, implement innovative projects, manage asset lifecycles, and support land development to meet community needs.
- **Emergency Planning** – Preparing the community for emergencies and ensuring personal preparedness.



- **Fire Department** – Fire rescue and fire safety education
- **Finance** – Managing financial planning, property taxes, payments accounting, payroll, risk management, asset management, procurement.
- **GIS** (Geographical Information Systems) offers visual representation of organizational data through various publicly available web maps.
- **Health Care** – medical clinic to provide Colwood families access to family doctors.
- **Human Resources** – Recruitment and onboarding, job evaluation and compensation, benefits, occupational health and safety, employee relations, labour relations.
- **Information Technology** – uses technology and data to enhance community programs, services, and governance.
- **Public Works** – Maintenance of parks, roads, sidewalks, sewers, storm drains, and the Branch Drop Off Program.
- **Youth Engagement** – Connecting youth to people, creation of safe places for youth, preventative programming, promotion and improvement of access to services.

## Our Plan

The City of Colwood’s Corporate Accessibility Plan outlines the steps in which The City will further identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility for our programs and services. It also seeks to foster a culture of equity and inclusion for all current and future residents, visitors, volunteers, and employees.

The Accessibility Plan solidifies Colwood’s dedication to identifying, removing, and preventing accessibility barriers. It outlines our initiatives and actions to promote transparency, accountability, feedback, and

dialogue, ensuring the Plan evolves to meet the community's needs and experiences.

This approach aims to be more realistic, ensuring The Plan is both manageable and achievable within current resources. As staff deepen their understanding over the initial 3-year term, the organization will continue to integrate accessibility into regular operations. Early successes in this inaugural Plan will build momentum for the next Plan in 2027. The Plan will guide the City of Colwood in achieving long-term accessibility goals in line with legislative requirements. It will take time to eliminate barriers, however the Plan will assist in identifying how we can improve accessibility going forward.

The Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee is a collaborative effort that focused on *employment and service delivery* as they are the first two standards of the *Accessibility BC Act*. This approach was adopted through recommendations from the province as well as information received through hired consultants.

## **Regulation**

There are eight standards included in the *Accessible BC Act*:

- 1. Employment**
- 2. Delivery of Services**
3. Built Environment
4. Information and Communications
5. Transportation
6. Health
7. Education
8. Procurement

## **Changing Paces - Recommendations**

The Capital West Accessibility Committee engaged Changing Paces, an accessibility consulting firm to conduct a survey and facilitate workshop engagement sessions. Changing Paces facilitators are persons who have lived experience with a disability. Through the engagement Changing Paces collected data and provided recommendations to be included within the Accessibility Plan.

The following is a summary of the recommendations from Changing Paces have been reviewed by City staff and include what The City has done, what we are doing, and what we may explore to improve accessibility:

<b>1. ACCESSIBLE PARKING</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Delivery of Services</b></li> <li>- <b>Built Environment</b></li> <li>- <b>Transportation</b></li> </ul>
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Exceed minimum requirements and ensure accessible parking during events.**

**What We Have Done**

- Two accessible parking spots within the public parking lot at City Hall.
- One accessible parking spot within the staff parking area at City Hall.
- Identified accessible parking spots at the Esquimalt Lagoon.
- Adopted local accessible parking regulations with comprehensive design standards.
- Accessible stalls added to Quarry Park and Colwood Park & Ride.
- Accessible signage.

**What We Are Doing**

- Investigating the addition of an accessible parking spots at:
  - Emery Family Hall and St. John the Baptist,
  - 170 Goldfinch,
  - Beachlands, and
  - Royal Bay.

### What We May Explore

- Obtain data on the current usage of accessible parking spots within Colwood parks to determine if additional parking spots should be explored.

<b>2. CITY FACILITIES</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Delivery of Services</b></li> <li>- <b>Built Environment</b></li> <li>- <b>Information and Communications</b></li> </ul>
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Provide accessible entrances, washrooms, and seating.**

### What We Have Done

- Accessible button controlled front door at City Hall.
- Public washrooms at City Hall have large accessible stalls.
- Emery Hall washrooms renovated in 2024 and are accessible, including an automatic door entry.
- City Hall has benches and chairs with arm rests within the foyer.
- Chairs in gallery are easily moveable to create additional accessibility if required.
- Chairs with arms are included within the chambers.
- Webcasting and allowing for electronic public participation at Council meetings.
- Sound system is included within the Committee Room and in the foyer.

- Consultation with Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) member when accessibility improvements were done at Emery Family Hall.

### What We Are Doing

- Explore an additional power door at the staff parking lot entrance to City Hall.
- Addition of accessible public bathrooms at 170 Goldfinch.
- Investigate additional chairs with arms (not on wheels) for Council Chambers.

### What We May Explore

- Reviewing front entrance to include a power door for Emery Hall.
- Explore public washrooms at City Hall for the installation of power door entry.
- Explore adjustable podium to allow easier access for public using mobility devices.
- Add a hearing loop for Council and Committee meetings.

<p><b>3. MUNICIPAL PARKS, TRAILS AND PLAYGROUNDS</b></p>	<p><b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivery of Services</li> <li>- Built Environment</li> <li>- Transportation</li> <li>- Information and Communications</li> </ul>
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Ensure accessible playgrounds, pathways, and rest stops.**

### What We Have Done

- Individual Park management plans have identified areas where an increase in benches and picnic shelters is required.

[Individual plans for the following parks: Colwood Creek, Ocean View, Lookout Lake, Havenwood, and Latoria Creek.]

- Accessible art space and washrooms at the Esquimalt Lagoon.
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the integration of accessibility for all ages and abilities in the planning, development, and upgrades of parks, trails, and recreation.

### **What We Are Doing**

- Multi-Use Pathway on the Waterfront – developing an accessible, multi-use pathway along four kilometres of City waterfront. The project includes pathways, raised boardwalks, meeting places, improved parking, and wheelchair mats to guide visitors through sensitive areas while protecting natural features.
- Beach Access Mat at the Esquimalt Lagoon during the summer to provide easier access to the beach for individuals with mobility challenges.
- Accessible Amenities: Providing accessible washrooms, picnic areas, and seating.
- Signage and Wayfinding: Implementing clear and easy to read signage to help visitors navigate the parks.

### **What We May Explore**

- Accessible pathways: Ensuring pathways are wide enough for wheelchairs and mobility devices.
- Inclusive playgrounds: Installing playground equipment that is accessible to children of all abilities.
- Park management plans have identified areas where an increase in benches and picnic shelters in Royal Bay and Beachlands.

<p><b>4. WORKSPACES, ACCOMODATIONS, INCLUSION</b></p>	<p><b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment</li> <li>- Health</li> <li>- Education</li> <li>- Information and Communications</li> </ul>
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Offer ergonomic modifications and flexible work schedules.**

**What We Have Done**

- The front counter at City Hall includes a lower service counter area for those using mobility devices.
- A mental health and wellness program has been implemented to build resilience and capacity for fire department members. This important information also provides first responders with transferable tools to help deliver community services in a compassionate and inclusive manner.
- Autism awareness training has been delivered to first responders.
- Supported employees who have been injured through a modified return to work program.
- The fire department has established a mission statement that includes key visioning and core values that act as a guide to help facilitate the decision-making process in a transparent and inclusive manner.
- Workplace practices are adaptable and individualized wherever possible and support physical and psychological health and safety including:
  - Hybrid meeting spaces are in place to support staff attending meetings in person or virtually,

- Flexible Work Arrangements Policy includes multiple options, including individualized/customized options to optimize inclusivity and accessibility,
- Healthy ergonomic work practices are encouraged, and appropriate tools and equipment are provided (example: height adjustable desks, including sit/stand styles; assistive technologies are explored and provided); our Occupational Health and Safety program offers ergonomic consultations and assists with identifying adjustments and options,
- Injury and Illness Management and Return to Work Policy encourages maintaining connection with employees who are temporarily disabled and workplace accommodations to ensure work can continued to be performed at an appropriate level to current abilities,
- Job evaluation methodology has been implemented to as an equitable/unbiased approach to job classification, and
- Compensation Philosophy and Exempt Compensation Policy implemented to promote pay equity and align with the BC Pay Transparency Act.

### **What We Are Doing**

- Facilities, including all physical spaces such as offices, restrooms, break rooms, common areas and walkways/hallways are ensured to be maintained as accessible for employees and meeting guests/visitors with disabilities and those facing barriers.
- Expanding mental and physical health programs for first responders to ensure they are prepared to support the community.

### **What We May Explore**

- Workplace emergency procedures to be updated to ensure measures are in place to consider, address and accommodate



employees or workplace visitors with disabilities and those facing barriers.

- First responders will seek training opportunities related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity.

<b>5. COLLABORATION WITH PERSONS WITH ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Information and Communications</li><li>- Delivery of Services</li><li>- Employment</li><li>- Information and Communications</li></ul>
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Engage with disability advocacy groups and involve people with disabilities in decision-making.**

#### **What We Have Done**

- Provided administrative support to the Access West Shore Society formally Intermunicipal Advisory Committee on Disabilities.
- Collaboration with neighbouring municipalities to create an Accessibility Plan.
- Creation of an accessible email address for residents to provide feedback and share their experiences regarding accessibility. [accessibility@colwood.ca](mailto:accessibility@colwood.ca).

#### **What We Are Doing**

- Engage with disability advocacy groups and residents with disabilities in planning and decision-making processes.
- Creating an individual Colwood Accessibility Plan to improve access to municipal services, facilities, and natural and build environments. The Plan will first focus on employment and service delivery standards and will be reviewed and updated every three years.

- Colwood actively seeks feedback from residents to identify barriers and improve accessibility. Public participation is encouraged through various channels, including email, phone, in-person meetings and Let's Talk Colwood an online platform to engage residents.
- The Capital West Accessibility Committee is transitioning to have citizen representatives on the Committee.
- Engagement with Changing Paces to conduct surveys to determine areas of focus for the Accessibility Corporate Plan.
- Engagement with the community through a comprehensive public education program focussing on special needs in relation to fire safety.
- Established partnerships with building owners and occupiers to address occupant safety through a review and implementation of Fire Safety Plans or individual .
- Provide fire and life safety education and onsite assessments for individuals facing specialized challenges to ensure their safety and well-being is maintained.
- Review building and development proposals through an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens.

## What We May Explore

- Inclusion of the Accessibility Plan in the Ideas Fair as a topic for feedback from the community.
- Creation of an email group of all organizations that are focused on improving accessibility.
- Additional Engagement sessions focused on specific demographics such as seniors.

<b>6. COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b> - Information and Communications - Delivery of Services - Education
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Provide multiple communication avenues and ensure accessible event promotion.**

**What We Have Done**

- Launched the new website in 2024, designed to be more user-friendly and accessible, providing easier navigation and improved access to information about city services, events and news.
- New website meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) – provides guidelines on making web content more accessible to people with disabilities.
- Quick link on the main website to the accessibility page.
- Neighbourhood Wayfinding Strategy – to improve navigation with directional and pedestrian signage designed based on legibility standards.
- Offer paper versions or 'call to complete' (where a staff member will input verbal responses on a resident's behalf) options for all online surveys.
- Increased engagement with youth to ensure their perspective is included in decision making.
- Translation option added to the websites home page.
- Increased engagement with youth to ensure their perspective is included in decision making.
- Developed and maintained relationships with community groups to obtain increased access to user groups for the purposes of engagement and delivery of emergency related education and training.

- Organized and delivered emergency related initiatives to prepare the public for local disasters through community events such as the Great BC ShakeOut, Tsunami Hike to High Ground, Fire Department Annual Open House, and Regional Emergency Preparedness Fair.

### What We Are Doing

- All phone calls during operational hours at City Hall are answered by a live person.
- Utilizing multiple methods of communication to ensure health and safety education is accessible to all members of the community which includes the use of social media, print, and in-person platforms.

### What We May Explore

- Investigate the need to having translation available for those whose first language is not English.
- Explore additional public participation opportunities such as town halls.

<b>7. Digital Solutions</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b> - <b>Communication</b> - <b>Delivery of Services</b>
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Use electronic forms and accessible document training.**

### What We Have Done

- Implemented DocuSign that provides better accessibility. DocuSign allows users to navigate through the signing process using only keyboard commands, works with screen reads (JAWS and DVDA) making it accessible for visually impaired users, adheres to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

- Digital Accessibility, creation of new website follows the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to ensure it is usable for residents with various disabilities and offers one-click translation.
- Citizen engagement platforms allow residents to report issues, track the status of their requests and access the information.
- Website provides a quick link for residents to submit an action request.
- Electronic payment option to allow residents to pay taxes.
- Creation of online forms reduces paperwork and streamlines service delivery.
- Cybersecurity Measures – implementation of robust cybersecurity protocols to protect residents’ data and ensure safe digital interactions.

### What We Are Doing

- Creation of how-to tutorials for staff on the Intranet.
- Implementation of new records system using M365
- Completion of Tempest to include webservices and online payment functionality.

### What We May Explore

- Explore accessibility funding programs to implement accessibility initiatives such as built environment, education and awareness, policy develop, and the use of assistive technologies.
- Virtual learning sessions and information on best practices for accessibility.

<b>8. Customer Solutions</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Communication</b></li> <li>- <b>Delivery of Services</b></li> </ul>
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Offer customer service training and consult with accessibility organizations.**

## What We Have Done

- Capital West Accessibility Committee member has received their Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) Professional Training.
- Engaged with the Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre (IDHHC) to connect community members with support programs that help overcome the challenges faced by hearing impairment during fire alarm activations.

## What We Are Doing

- Establishment of new medical clinic - This pilot project's goal is to increase community well-being by providing residents with access to a family doctor. The central location will be easily accessible by public transportation and the range of services will reduce the need for residents to travel to multiple locations for health care. Healthcare will be more convenient for residents with accessibility issues.

## What We May Explore

- Offer training for municipal staff on accessibility standards and best practices to ensure they can assist residents with disabilities effectively.
- Training opportunities can be cost shared between all municipalities included in the Capital West Accessibility Committee.
- Look to forming partnerships with local organizations and advocacy groups to develop and implement accessibility initiatives.

<p><b>9. Policy Solutions</b></p> <p><b>Related</b></p>	<p><b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Communication</b></li> <li>- <b>Delivery of Services</b></li> <li>- <b>Employment</b></li> </ul>
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Integrate accessibility into planning and processes from the start.**

**What We Have Done**

- Implemented DocuSign on all City permit application forms to provide better accessibility.
- Consideration of accessibility when drafting plans such as the Active Transportation Plan and Transportation Master Plan
- Integrated equity considerations as an element of planning and implementation of key actions of the City’s Climate Action Plan (2023), including related to emergency planning/ disaster risk reduction, building retrofits for energy and resilience, urban forest and natural asset planning.
- One of the three overarching goals of the City’s Climate Action Plan is to maximize co-benefits of climate action. One of the co-benefits identified in the plan is for social inclusion and equity and other related co-benefits.

**What We Are Doing**

- The City’s Climate Action Plan has a priority action (C1-2) to develop an equity lens to support decision-making in the City and to provide professional development for Colwood staff, including to support planning and initiatives that will increase climate resiliency and co-benefits for vulnerable populations.
- Development of community disaster risk reduction visioning and policies that will be consider the implemented in an inclusive manner.

- Establishing a community wide mental health resilience strategy that will act as a roadmap to prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters.

### What We May Explore

- Addition of Accessibility section on all City reports that relate to employment and delivery of services.
- Review of the City’s Public Participation Policy through the lens of accessibility.
- Disaster Risk Reduction – Climate Adaption initiative. Staff will be consulting with vulnerable groups as part of our Community Risk Assessment to be included in Colwood’s Disaster Risk Reduction Plan and Mental Health Resilience Strategy.

<p><b>10. Employment</b></p>	<p><b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Communication</b></li> <li>- <b>Delivery of Services</b></li> <li>- <b>Employment</b></li> </ul>
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**Changing Paces Recommendations: Ensure job postings and hiring processes are accessible and inclusive.**

### What We Have Done

Hiring practices consider accessibility and inclusivity:

- Internal only job opportunities are posted in hardcopy within the City and distributed by email; internal & external job opportunities maintain our internal practices in addition to being posted by a variety of electronic means and online posting sites
- Job postings include language stating our commitment to equity and fostering inclusivity and that we value diversity; some postings may more overtly invite diversity, and consideration



- may be given to specific posting locations/sites to attract candidates that will bring enhanced diversity to the team
- Applications can be submitted by email or in person
  - Virtual interviews are/can be supported
  - in-person interview invitations provide general information relating to physical accessibility and invite candidates to contact HR confidentially to discuss further accommodations if needed.

Workplace practices are adaptable and individualized wherever possible and support physical and psychological health and safety:

- Hybrid meeting spaces are in place to support staff attending meetings in person or virtually
- Flexible Work Arrangements Policy includes multiple options, including individualized/customized options to optimize inclusivity and accessibility
- Healthy ergonomic work practices are encouraged, and appropriate tools and equipment are provided (example: height adjustable desks, including sit/stand styles; assistive technologies are explored and provided); our Occupational Health and Safety program offers ergonomic consultations and assists with identifying adjustments and options
- Injury and Illness Management and Return to Work Policy encourages maintaining connection with employees who are temporarily disabled and workplace accommodations to ensure work can continued to be performed at an appropriate level to current abilities
- Job evaluation methodology has been implemented to as an equitable/unbiased approach to job classification
- Compensation Philosophy and Exempt Compensation Policy implemented to promote pay equity and align with the BC Pay Transparency Act

## What We Are Doing

- Policies, procedures and practices are reviewed on an ongoing basis to consider inclusivity and accessibility.
- 2024 Benefits Review project currently in process includes incorporation of GBA+ methodology to assess our benefits program through a diversity and inclusion lens.
- Internal communications consider inclusivity and accessibility.
- Meetings, workshops, training sessions and staff events consider inclusivity and accessibility.
- Facilities, including all physical spaces such as offices, restrooms, break rooms, common areas and walkways/hallways are ensured to be maintained as accessible for employees and meeting guests/visitors with disabilities.
- Employee Satisfaction Survey is conducted every 3 years (next one is 2025) which provides a feedback mechanism on workplace matters, including matters related to inclusivity and accessibility.
- Embrace and promote diversity and inclusion in employment practices.

## What We May Explore

- Training to included accessibility awareness training for managers and supervisors as well as for all staff; potential for collaboration with neighbouring municipalities
- Workplace emergency procedures to be updated to ensure measures are in place to consider, address and accommodate employees or workplace visitors with disabilities
- Developing a plan to review areas of additional focus to enhance accessibility within the workplace; may include an accessibility audit.

<b>11. City Events</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Communication</b></li> <li>- <b>Delivery of Services</b></li> <li>- <b>Employment</b></li> </ul>

**Changing Paces Recommendations: Promote accessibility information and provide accessible event spaces.**

**What We Have Done**

- Provided accessible parking at Eats and Beats.
- Established a wheelchair viewing area at Eats & Beats.
- Provided a tent for Mental Health Awareness at Eats and Beats.
- Provided shuttle service to the event, and shuttle service for residents from Metchosin to the event at Eats and Beats.
- Provided shuttle service for elders and participants to the Indigenous Day event at RRU.
- Increased accessibility provided at the fire department Open House with designated accessible parking and access to all event displays.

**What We Are Doing**

- Planning public participation events such as open houses and public workshops at accessible locations.

**What We May Explore**

<b>12. Infrastructure</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE BC ACT STANDARD</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Communication</b></li> <li>- <b>Delivery of Services</b></li> <li>- <b>Transportation</b></li> <li>- <b>Employment</b></li> </ul>

**Changing Paces Recommendations: Update sidewalks and crosswalks to meet accessibility standards.**

## What We Have Done

- The Transportation Master Plan aims to enhance accessibility options for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. It focuses on improving facilities for walking, biking, and taking transit, making the City more accessible and reducing reliance on cars.
- Colwood has chosen to implement 2-meter side sidewalks as part of its Official Community Plan implementation and draft Active Transportation Network Plan. The goal of this initiative is to ensure accessibility through application of the 7 Principles of Universal Design and safety for all users. The 2-meter width allows two average size wheelchairs or strollers to pass each other comfortably.
- Adding sidewalks to areas that were previously unfinished road shoulders and applying design guidelines and best practices to endeavor to make these new amenities more accessible to all.
- Bus pad/shelter upgrades. New or refurbished bus pads to allow for accessible access.
- Wayfinding Signage.

## What We Are Doing

- Finalization of draft Active Transportation Network Plan including its section “6.2 - Universal Design” in concert with the Transportation Master Plan Update.
- Ongoing capital projects to improve roads inclusive of sidewalks, bikelanes, cross walks, intersections.
- Utilizing grant funding to support upgrades which include improving accessibility standards in situations such as at intersections/ cross walks and bike lanes.

## What We May Explore

- Consideration of regular assessment audits of City infrastructure to identify and address barriers.
- Ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to better appreciate and understand accessible design and planning at early stages in project and throughout delivery.
- Mobility mat at the Lagoon beach to make the shoreline more accessible.

### **2025 Plan - Objective 1: Employment**

Employment objectives include goals and actions aimed at creating an inclusive and accessible work environment at the City for people with disabilities. These objectives may include recruitment and hiring, training and development, retention and advancement, workplace accommodation and inclusive policies.

The City of Colwood strives to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunity to succeed in their employment and contribute fully to the workplace.

### **2025 Plan: Objective 1 – Delivery of Services**

The City will adopt methods and practices to ensure that goods, services, events, and activities are accessible to everyone in the community. This includes removing barriers that might prevent individuals from fully participating and ensuring that all aspects of service delivery are inclusive and equitable

The following initiatives reflect Colwood’s ongoing commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible community for everyone.

## **Approach**

For the initial three-year term, the City's intention is for staff to:

- receive fundamental training;
- apply an accessibility lens to daily operations; and
- receive and consider public feedback.

The City aims to make continual improvements to accessibility and inclusivity by:

- Respecting the rights, dignity, and independence of persons with disabilities at all life stages.
- Creating a safe environment where all people feel welcomed, include, and valued.
- Providing opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in decision-making and Township life.
- Incorporating feedback and input from people with disabilities into processes, policy development, and decision-making.
- Listening and learning how to make programs, services, and physical infrastructure more accessible.

## Goals

The Accessibility Plan outlines a comprehensive approach to achieving long-term accessibility goals in line with legislative requirements and aims to enhance our corporate capacity to lead, model, and advocate for accessibility changes within the community. The Plan emphasizes the importance of eliminating barriers, improving accessibility across various aspects of city life with the intention of providing professional and inclusive services, and to build strong, collaborative partnerships within the community.

Colwood is working to create an inclusive work environment for people with disabilities, marginalized communities and others who experience barriers, ensuring that services are accessible to all residents.

Achieving barrier-free status is a significant endeavor that will evolve as we learn, incorporate feedback from those with lived experiences, foster strong relationships with disability and accessibility communities, introduce new technology, and deepen our understanding of disability dynamics. By working together, we can make Colwood a place where everyone can fully and equally participate in the community and feel empowered to pursue the life they wish to live with a strong sense of belonging.

Public input and feedback from those with lived experiences will be crucial in monitoring and improving Colwood's accessibility performance. This will help us better understand the barriers and challenges faced by our residents, visitors, and staff. The input, suggestions, and feedback we receive will guide the continuous enhancement of the City's programs, spaces, and services, ensuring meaningful access for everyone and a community where everyone can flourish.