

NO: R148

COUNCIL DATE: September 25, 2023

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **September 19, 2023**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**

FILE: **0550-20**

SUBJECT: **City of Surrey's Accessibility Action Plan**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Endorse the draft Accessibility Action Plan (attached as Appendix "I").

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council's endorsement of the draft Accessibility Action Plan in accordance with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*.

BACKGROUND

In September 2022, the Province enacted the *Accessible British Columbia Act* which legislates municipalities and other prescribed organizations to:

1. Establish an Accessibility Committee;
2. Develop an Accessibility Plan addressing all aspects of accessibility to municipal services, facilities, and communications;
3. Develop a method to receive public feedback on the plan; and
4. Review and update the Accessibility Plan every three years.

The legislation requires prescribed organizations (including municipalities) to have a plan drafted by September 1, 2023. The City's draft plan has been developed over the past 6 months and is currently posted on the website to seek public feedback before finalizing the plan. In response to the legislated requirements, the Parks, Recreation & Culture department led an interdepartmental team to develop a draft Accessibility Action Plan in collaboration with the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (*Previously Measuring Up Committee*). The Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team is a network of community leaders that have a commitment to increasing universal access through physical accessibility, employment/volunteerism, recreation, literacy, and strategic planning for people who have a disability in Surrey. This group acts as a resource and liaison to community, research and business groups as well as provides engagement and insight to City strategic plans and projects.

DISCUSSION

The draft Accessibility Action Plan is a high-level document that underscores the City of Surrey's commitment to fostering an inclusive City. Continued public engagement will take place throughout Fall 2023 to update and finalize the Accessibility Action Plan. Once finalized, the Accessibility Action will be updated every three years as required under the legislation.

The Accessibility Action Plan addresses five key focus areas which feature several actions. The key focus areas include:

- Inclusive Service Design and Delivery;
- Accessible Communication and Engagement;
- Built Environment and Public Spaces;
- Accessible Employment Practices; and
- Accessible Procurement.

Through initial consultation with community members and City staff, staff have developed an action plan that exceeds the requirements set forth by the Accessible British Columbia Act. The plan addresses existing barriers and endeavors to anticipate future community needs. One of the primary objectives of the plan is to create an open dialogue with residents, incorporating their feedback into the ongoing development and implementation of the plan.

The success of the Accessibility Action Plan rests on collaboration, resource allocation, and persistent efforts. In committing to the Accessibility Action Plan, the City aims to cultivate a culture of inclusivity that reflects the diverse needs of the community.

CONCLUSION

The Parks, Recreation, & Culture Department recommends that Council endorses the draft Accessibility Action Plan. The final Accessibility Action Plan will be brought forward to Council in the first quarter of 2023 for endorsement of the plan once all feedback has been incorporated.

Laurie Cavan,
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Appendix "I": City of Surrey's Accessibility Action Plan



City of Surrey's

Accessibility Action Plan

DRAFT

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Acronyms

AAC	Accessibility Action Plan
ABCA	Accessible British Columbia Act
ACA	Accessible Canada Act
ASL	American Sign Language
CoS	City of Surrey
IAAC	Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee
PWD	Person with disabilities
UD	Universal Design
SALT	Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team




Photo: Youth on
the Move Summer
Camp Participant



SECTION 1

Introduction



The City of Surrey is situated on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the səmyámə (Semiahmoo), ǵícəy (Katzie), and ǵʷa:ńłəń (Kwantlen) land-based Nations who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial.



Message from Mayor

On behalf of City Council, I am pleased to present the City of Surrey's new Accessibility Action Plan developed in full alignment with the Accessible British Columbia Act. This initiative reflects our commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible Surrey for all members of our community. By embracing the principles outlined in this plan, we are taking vital steps toward removing barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for everyone regardless of their abilities. Through collaboration with various stakeholders, we have crafted a comprehensive strategy that will address physical, digital, and societal barriers that prevent some of our residents from fully participating in all that our beautiful city has to offer. This plan not only complies with legal requirements, but it, aims to create an environment where diversity is celebrated, and all individuals can thrive.

As we move forward in putting this plan into action, public feedback will be crucial to ensuring we are on track with our accessibility goals. Your support is essential as we continue to build accessible infrastructure, enhance public services, and raise awareness about the importance of inclusion. In Surrey everyone matters, so let's work together to ensure that our city becomes a shining example of an inclusive and accessible place for all.

Mayor Brenda Locke
City of Surrey

Commitment to Accessibility

The City will identify, remove, and prevent barriers in all areas of services, programs and infrastructure, to provide residents with an inclusive and accessible experience.

The City will provide an accessible environment in which residents, visitors and employees with disabilities can access the City's goods, services and facilities, including buildings, public spaces, information and communications, in a way that meets their individual needs.

The City will support City employees with consultation, policies, tools, resources and government structures that promote an inclusive workplace and support City employees in delivering accessible goods, services and facilities.

Values

The City of Surrey's values guide the way we serve our residents, engage in our community and work with each other.

COMMUNITY

We care about and contribute to the broader well-being of the community. We strive to make Surrey a great place for our citizens to live, work, invest, recreate, and raise a family.

INNOVATION

We welcome change. We actively look for leading-edge initiatives and welcome new approaches and original thinking. We are committed to continuous improvement; we recognize all experiences as important learning opportunities.

INTEGRITY

We are honest. We are accountable for our decisions. We meet our commitments. We are forthright in our communications. We understand and comply with all laws, regulations, and policies.

SERVICE

Customers are important to us. We want to help our customers. We seek to understand our customers' needs, and actively work to achieve responsive balanced solutions.

TEAMWORK

We support each other. We trust each other. We respect each other. We take a City-wide view of the challenges we face. We value everyone's ideas.

Definitions

For the purpose of the Accessibility Action Plan, the City of Surrey defines the subsequent terms to create a common language to further the work:

Accessibility	Accessibility means that all people can take part in their communities through work, play and other daily activities. ¹
Accommodation	Accommodation refers to the employer’s responsibilities to tailor the workplace to meet the needs of the individual employee under the BC Human Rights Code. The purpose of accommodation is to provide access to employment opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace. ²
Barrier	Means anything — including anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice — that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. ³
Disability	Means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society. ⁴
Impairment	Includes a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic. ⁵
Universal Design	Process of creating services and environments that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, and other characteristics. ⁶

Acknowledgement of Key Contributors

The City of Surrey extends its sincere gratitude to the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team and Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee for their invaluable contributions and unwavering dedication in shaping and implementing the City’s Accessibility Plan in alignment with the Accessible BC Act.

Their sharing of lived experiences, insightful guidance, expertise, and collaborative efforts have played a pivotal role in creating an inclusive and accessible environment for all members of our community. We applaud their commitment to championing accessibility and enhancing the quality of life for individuals of all abilities within our city.

¹ Government of British Columbia <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation/summary#01>

² Government of British Columbia “Managing Employee Accommodation in the Workplace” Last updated: 2019-04-23 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/managers-supervisors/employee-labour-relations/managing-accommodation>

³ Government of Canada: Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c.10) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/page-1.html#h-1153395>

⁴ Government of Canada: Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c.10) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/page-1.html#h-1153395>

⁵ Accessible British Columbia Act, SBC 2021, C 19 <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019>

⁶ BC Accessibility Hub <https://bcaccessibilityhub.ca/resources/glossary/>



Photo: Adapted
Boccia Participant



SECTION 2

Framework Guiding Our Work

The purpose of the Accessibility Action Plan (AAP) is to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals working for or interacting with the City of Surrey. These actions further the City of Surrey's efforts to make services and built environments accessible and welcoming to people of all ages and abilities. We will follow accessibility legislation, including:

- > UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- > Canadian Human Rights Act;
- > BC Human Rights Code;
- > Accessible Canada Act;
- > Accessible BC Act; and
- > City of Surrey People Practice – Human Rights Policy.

The AAP builds on legislation focused on accessibility within the Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA) and the Accessible Canada Act (ACA). The following subsections discuss the provincial and federal legislation.

Accessible British Columbia Act

The Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA) was enacted in June 2021. The ABCA is an important piece of enabling legislation that paves the way for future regulations that will address barriers to access for people with disabilities in a range of areas including employment, service delivery, the built environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education, and procurement.

The Accessible British Columbia Regulations under the ABCA came into effect September 1, 2022 and requires prescribed organizations to meet the following requirements by September 1, 2023:

- > Establish an accessibility advisory committee;
- > Develop an accessibility plan; and
- > Create a public feedback mechanism.

These requirements and the City of Surrey's ability to meet them before September 2023 are discussed below.

Accessible Canada Act

The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) was passed in 2019, with the goal to make Canada barrier free by January 1, 2040. The legislation benefits all Canadians, especially persons with disabilities, through the proactive identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility in seven priority areas:

- > Employment
- > The built environment
- > Information and communication technologies (ICT)
- > Communication other than ICT;
- > The design and delivery of programs and services
- > The procurement of goods, services and facilities
- > Transportation

Develop an Accessibility Plan

An accessibility plan should outline how the City of Surrey will identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people interacting with or working in local government. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every three years.

The development of this Accessibility Action Plan satisfies the ABCA requirement for the City of Surrey to have an accessibility plan.

In the development of the Accessibility Action Plan, the City of Surrey considered the following principles identified in the ABCA:

Inclusion	All residents of the City of Surrey, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.
Adaptability	Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change. ¹
Diversity	Every person is unique. People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and lived experience greatly inform the experiences of individuals. Accessibility legislation should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the diversity within the community.
Collaboration	Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Legislation should create opportunities for government, community, and business to work together to promote access and inclusion
Self-determination	Accessibility legislation should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.
Universal design	Process of creating services and environments that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities and other characteristics ²

¹ British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/about-the-bc-government/accessible-bc/disability-consultation/2019-consultation/framework-for-accessibility-legislation.pdf>

² BC Accessibility Hub <https://bcaccessibilityhub.ca/resources/glossary/>

Establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee

Under the ABCA a committee must be established to assist the municipality to identify barriers and advise on how to prevent barriers that individuals have when interacting with the organization. The selection of the accessibility committee should, to the extent possible, be made up of:

- > At least 50% people with disabilities or those who represent those with disabilities, and
- > At least one person of Indigenous background

The Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team is reviewing the current terms of reference and membership to continue to strengthen inclusivity and collaboration.

Create a Public Feedback Mechanism

The City of Surrey must establish a process for receiving public comments on the City of Surrey's Accessibility Action Plan, and on the barriers, individuals face both interacting with and working within the organization.

The City of Surrey values the input, suggestions, and feedback from residents. The City understands the importance of continuously improving programs and services to better meet the needs of the community. To facilitate open communication and encourage feedback, the City provides various channels through which residents can submit their feedback. These channels include online forms, email and phone.



Photo: Summer Camp Participant



Photo: Child playing at the Inclusive Playground at Unwin Park

Guiding Documents

The City of Surrey views accessibility as a vital part of equity and inclusion work. Accessibility is apparent in a variety of plans and strategies which help steer the organization. By including accessibility as a lens in guiding documents, the City underlines the commitment to making Surrey a more accessible place to live, work and play and in the future.

City of Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) Strategic Plan 2018-2027

The [Parks, Recreation & Culture \(PRC\) Strategic Plan](#) is a blueprint for determining PRC facility and service decisions until 2027.

The plan is a forward-looking strategy that identifies the greatest needs and opportunities for residents, and presents a vision of a healthy, green, inclusive community, where individuals, culture and the environment thrive.

The PRC plan will guide future decision making while allowing the City to be responsive to changing needs and demographics. The plan has two primary purposes: to set direction and to guide investment.

Museum of Surrey: Accessibility Plan (MoS) 2022-2025

The Museum of Surrey aspires to be accessible in every sense of the word: physically, intellectually, culturally, and economically. MoS is committed to making visitors feel welcome, comfortable, and safe. The MoS Accessibility Plan was updated in February 2023 and focuses on three themes: programming; building; partnership and community. Within these three themes, MoS Accessibility Plan is further broken into six key areas of action. The MoS Accessibility Plan is intended to be carried out between March 2022 and March 2024.

The following plans are under development to address accessibility, equity and inclusion within the City of Surrey:

Parks, Recreation and Culture: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

The new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will replace two existing policies, the PRC Inclusion Policy (2009), PRC Diversity Policy (2019) and Gender Equity Policy (2009).

Surrey Libraries: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility (EDIA) and Wellness Action Plan

The EDIA and Wellness Action Plan will be designed as an ongoing and continuous improvement action plan for implementing recommendations of EDIA Committee, stakeholder and community consultation and asset audits. The purpose is to ensure that Surrey Libraries reflects, represents, and sustains the values and principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

Surrey Art Gallery (SAG): Accessibility Plan

The purpose of the plan is to draft and map out the Surrey Art Gallery's work towards integrating access considerations into all work. This includes building on past initiatives to increasing our learning and new initiatives in the long term. The plan will include:

- > Established internal working group;
- > Work areas include SAG communications, event planning, language initiatives, website, wayfinding, courses, camps, workshops, Family Programs, training and knowledge sharing, library, exhibitions, collections, and commitment statement and infrastructure; and
- > Develop an accessibility commitment statement involving artist with lived experiences with disabilities.

Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors: Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors 2014

The City of Surrey adopted the Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors in 2014. The strategy was an outcome of a consultation process that included key elements of an age-friendly city which were developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2016, Surrey was officially recognized by the World Health Organization as an age friendly city. This recognition is a result of our commitment to the features of an age friendly community and demonstrates our strong commitment to our aging population.

The Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors continues to be a solid foundation; however, it requires updating to reflect current and future trends. In addition, it is important for us to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted seniors and how this experience has changed how we engage and work with the community. Currently the strategy is being updated and is scheduled for re-launch in late fall 2023.

The City of Surrey values the diverse contributions of our aging population. Through respectful community engagement we will collaborate with local organizations, levels of government, business, and most of all with seniors' groups and individuals to ensure seniors and their families have access to the resources and programs which support healthy active aging.



Photo: Inclusive Playground at Unwin Park - Colour Splash Sensory Play

Our Approach

City of Surrey's Accessibility Action Plan has been organized into five key focus areas that represent the seven focus areas of the ACA, the standards areas within the ABCA and the City of Surrey's values.

Inclusive Service Design and Delivery: Provide services and programs that are accessible for a full range of abilities.

Accessible Communication and Engagement: Communication and information provided is accessible to all. Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted and can easily share feedback and information through accessible feedback mechanisms.

Built Environment and Public Spaces: Ensuring buildings and other public spaces are accessible to community members following universal design guidelines.

Accessible Employment Practices: An inclusive and accessible workplace for all focused on attracting, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce that includes individuals with disabilities.

Accessible Procurement: Ensure goods and services purchased are accessible by design, where possible, so that individuals with disabilities can use them without adaptations.

About Our Committees

SURREY ACCESSIBILITY LEADERSHIP TEAM (SALT)

In 2008, the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (Formally Measuring Up Committee) was established. The Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (SALT) is a network of community leaders that are committed to full inclusion and accessibility across an individual's life span. The purpose of SALT is to make Surrey the most accessible and inclusive community by embracing all abilities. This includes educating the community by using the group's diversity and resources to create inclusive environments, remove barriers, develop relationships, and promote accessibility and inclusion. The Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team meets the membership requirements for accessibility committee.

INTERNAL ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (IAAC)

The Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee was created 2023 in response to the Accessible BC Act. The purpose of the IAAC to work collaboratively to assess and improve community livability, inclusivity, and accessibility for persons with disabilities who live, work, and play in the City of Surrey.

The committee will work alongside the SALT to provide recommendations and planned actions to the City of Surrey's Accessibility Action Plan in respect to the five Areas of Focus, in accordance with the Accessibility British Columbia Act.

The committee consists of internal department representatives that interact with the public and can provide expertise and relevant background information related to the City's Accessibility Action Plan and the five areas of focus. Additional representatives may be needed based on community need and departmental expertise in specific areas.



Photo: Inclusive Playground at Unwin Park - Braille Panel

Key Focus Area	Relevant Departments
Inclusive Service Design and Delivery	Parks, Recreation and Culture Surrey Libraries Community Services Finance Fire Department
Accessible Communication and Engagement	Parks, Recreation and Culture Marketing Information Technology Business Ops Social Planning
Built Environment and Public Spaces	Parks, Recreation and Culture Planning & Development Facilities Engineering/ Transportation
Accessible Employment Practices	Human Resources
Accessible Procurement	Purchasing



Photo: Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team Member at Newton Recreation Centre using the Upper Cycle Ergometer



SECTION 3

Actions and Implementation

The City of Surrey has developed the Accessibility Action Plan that includes actions that are organized according to the five key focus areas and consider a breadth of the services, facilities and communications provided by the City of Surrey. The Accessibility Action Plan carefully considered the principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.

Leads	
AMD	All municipal departments (<i>when every department is potentially involved in leading or supporting an action item</i>)
CS	Community Services
Eng	Engineering Department
FD	Fire Department
FIN	Finance Department
HR	Human Resources
IIR	Investment and Intergovernmental Relations
IT	Information Technology
PD	Planning and Development
PRC	Parks, Recreation and Culture
SL	Surrey Libraries

As the City of Surrey begins to move forward with the actions listed below, continued collaboration with, and involvement of, the SALT and further community engagement will be prioritized to develop a strategy to implement and evaluate the Accessibility Action Plan. This would include a prioritization process for the recommendations coming from the actions, a plan to resource the recommendations, and a schedule for updating and reviewing the recommendation in accordance with the legislated requirements (at least every three years).

PRIORITY

S = Short Term

L = Long Term

O = Ongoing

1 Inclusive Service Design and Delivery



The City of Surrey provides services and programs that are accessible for a full range of abilities.

Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
1.0 Continue to partner with organizations and persons with disabilities to increase offerings of programs that are innovative and inclusive.	PRC	Ongoing	O
1.1 Involve people with lived experience in service development to gather upfront feedback.	PRC	Ongoing	O
1.2 Encourage all permitted events, City, corporate and private, to have an accessibility plan that address accessibility before, during and after the event.	PRC	2024	L

2 Built Environment and Public Spaces



City of Surrey buildings and other public spaces are accessible to our community members following universal design guidelines.

	Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
2.0	Explore the feasibility of an accessibility GIS mapping system to present searchable information on accessibility amenities and barriers.	Eng PRC	2024	L
2.1	Incorporate accessibility standards into park design guidelines, which include consideration of the spectrum of disabilities to ensure new parks and public amenities are accessible	PRC	2023-2024	O
2.2	Evaluate facility design and construction procedures to ensure specifications include accessibility needs and are designed/built according to universal design principles.	PD	2024	L
2.3	Develop an accessibility checklist for operators or end users to use for facility and park audits.	PRC PD	2025	L

3 Accessible Communication and Engagement



Communication and information provided is accessible to all. Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted and can easily share information through accessible feedback mechanisms.

	Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
3.0	Develop procedures on the use of technology to enhance inclusion for people with disabilities, including the request process for new accessibility related software or applications.	IT	2024	O
3.1	<p>Create an internal SharePoint accessibility directory site for staff to access that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility related policies, procedures and guidelines • Appropriate and respectful language, neurodiversity terms and definitions, when to use identity-first language • Images that convey independence instead of dependence • Accessibility and inclusion training modules 	PRC	2024	S
3.2	Develop an accessible communication procedure related to ASL interpreters and communicating with persons with speech disabilities.	PRC	2024	S
3.3	Identify and address gaps in access to council meetings for persons with accessibility needs.	IIR PRC	2024	L
3.4	Create awareness of accessibility features that are currently available through various communication channels including webpage updates, social media and signage.	PRC PRC	2024- 2025	O
3.5	Update the City’s existing digital accessible approach and Resource list (2021) and review/update actions	PRC	2024	S

4 Accessible Employment Practices

Goal

The City of Surrey is an inclusive and accessible workplace for all focused on attracting, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce that includes individuals with disabilities.

Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
4.0 Establish a written and transparent accommodation process that outlines the decision process for current employees and during recruitment.	HR	Ongoing	O
4.1 Support universal design principles for employee workspaces in new buildings and facility renovations.	HR PD	Ongoing	O
4.3 Develop accessibility and inclusion training plan for staff.	PRC HR	2024	L

5 Accessible Procurement



Ensure goods and services purchased are accessible by design, where possible, so that individuals with disabilities can use them without adaptations.

Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
5.0 Review and update the Purchase and Payment: Process Manual to incorporate accessibility into the principles and purchasing responsibilities, and to require justification for not meeting accessibility criteria.	FS	2024-2025	L

Monitoring and Evaluation

The City of Surrey is fully committed to the principles of inclusivity and accessibility as outlined in the Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA). In accordance with this commitment, our accessibility plan will undergo a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation process every three years. This regular review will ensure that the plan remains aligned with the ABCA requirements and continues to effectively address the needs of individuals with disabilities in our community. By conducting these assessments, we aim to foster continuous improvement, identify areas for enhancement, and ensure that our city remains a place where everyone can participate fully and equally.

