



Accessibility Action Plan

PHASE 1 – 2023



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Acknowledgements

The City of Terrace exists on the unceded lands of the Ts'msyen (Tsimshian) people. The Mayor, Council, and staff at the City of Terrace are committed to building strong and respectful relationships with the Kitselas and Kitsumkalum First Nations. Recognizing the importance of these relationships and working towards truth and reconciliation are key priorities for the City of Terrace.

Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

The City of Terrace wishes to express our gratitude to the members of the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. This committee works with two distinct subgroups:

1. **Partner representatives** - these representatives are from various public sector organizations, including municipalities, libraries, and a post-secondary education institution.
2. **Advisory members** - we also worked with community accessibility advisory members, including experts, self-advocates, and residents with personal experiences related to accessibility.

The advisory members generously provided their time and expertise to identify barriers to accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities in our communities. They also advised on how to best prevent and remove these barriers moving forward.

The knowledge and valuable insights they shared have helped us to create this first phase of our Accessibility Plan to address accessibility issues in our organization, while also assisting partner organizations in creating their own accessibility plans.

We thank them for their contributions to the first phase of our accessibility planning and for their commitment as we continue our journey to improve accessibility in our organizations going forward.

Message from the Mayor



AMA SAH, welcome;

On behalf of the City of Terrace Council, I am pleased to share with you the City of Terrace Accessibility Plan – Phase 1 (2023). This document is the result of the efforts and dedication of City Council, our Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, City staff, and feedback from the broader community. This is the initial phase of our first City Accessibility Plan, and we are excited to have taken this step in an effort to improve our own awareness, accountability, and transparency in this area.

Terrace is a vibrant community that is strengthened by its diversity of people and their ideas, skills, and experiences. The City of Terrace is committed to removing barriers that could limit the full participation of our diverse population. We will use this plan to strive for equal access for everyone who lives, works, or visits here.

We are early in our journey. We recognize the need for an ongoing commitment from Council and staff to work together with our advisory committee members and to engage the public to ensure accessibility and inclusion remains top of mind in all our decisions.

I look forward to implementing this important plan and ensuring that accessibility is a priority in our community.

Sean Bujtas, Mayor

Introduction

The City of Terrace is located in the heart of Northwestern British Columbia, supporting more than 12,000 residents as well as those in the surrounding communities who work, play, and do business here.

Policy and Legislation

The City of Terrace's Accessibility Plan is a result of legislation (law) that was introduced in 2021, called the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. This law helps to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that make it difficult for people living with disabilities in our province. The goal of this new law is to make British Columbia more accessible for everyone.

The law covers different areas where accessibility is important. These areas include:

- Making sure services are easy to use for everyone.
- Ensuring that education is accessible to all, regardless of disabilities.
- Creating opportunities for people with disabilities to find employment.
- Making information and communications easy to understand and access.
- Ensuring that health services are accessible to everyone.
- Using fair and accessible methods for buying goods and services.
- Making the environment and buildings accessible to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring transportation is available for everyone.

As a public sector organization, we have a responsibility to follow the *Accessible British Columbia Act*.

This means we must do several things to demonstrate how we are improving accessibility:

1. Create an advisory committee.
2. Create an accessibility action plan.
3. Create a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility matters.

To inform the development and content of our Accessibility Plan, we are working with an advisory committee that represents our larger Terrace community.

This Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee helps us to:

1. Develop a common language to refer to matters related to disability and accessibility.
2. Identify barriers to accessibility and inclusion in our organization and communities.
3. Come up with strategies and ways to remove and prevent these barriers.
4. Develop our Accessibility Plan and help other organizations to do the same.
5. Gather public input on accessibility and inclusion issues affecting people with disabilities.

We are also developing a tool and process for the public to provide feedback on our action plan. We want to know about any challenges people face when interacting with or within our organization. This feedback is important for improving our Accessibility Plan and our service delivery in the future.

Related Policy and Planning Work

City of Terrace Community Plan

The City of Terrace's 2018 Official Community Plan (OCP) highlights our commitment to accessibility and represents a key step in achieving the City of Terrace's future vision for a vibrant and sustainable community.

The OCP has identified “social well-being” and “accessible recreation” as key goal areas for the City of Terrace. Social well-being within a community requires a willingness to work together on many levels. Working together helps us to embrace diversity in an open and inclusive manner.

The following objectives and supporting policy further support these goal areas:

1. Create a safe and secure built environment for all members of the community.
2. Support social and leisure opportunities that are affordable and accessible for all.
3. Support independence, self-reliance, and full community participation for persons with all abilities.

Community Vision

“Terrace will prosper from its surrounding natural abundance through access to outdoor recreation, sustainable resource-based industry, and full use of its agricultural potential. We will celebrate our diversity in heritage and culture and the social strength that comes from all ages and walks of life working together to create an inclusive, affordable, and vibrant city. We will strive to meet the health and educational needs of residents and visitors alike, achieving community vitality.”

City of Terrace Parks and Recreation Master Plan

This Master Plan was developed to guide recreation in our community into the future, with the goal of enhancing public park spaces and recreation in our community, including increasing the accessibility of parks and recreation opportunities and facilities.

From focus groups that were held as part of this planning process, seven goal areas were identified. “Inclusive Community Facilities and Services” was identified as goal area #2.

Objectives related to this goal included:

- Design programs that accommodate different ethnic and age groups, as well as those with different ability levels and interests.
- Provide recreation opportunities for persons with limited mobility and/or physical disabilities.
- Monitor demographic trend and modify programs over time as needed.

This goal area reflects a commitment to recreation (both indoor and outdoor) that serves all of Terrace’s population and helps to set the policy foundation for future work of the JAAC.

Background on the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee

In 2023, the City of Terrace (CoT) invited the participation of several public sector organizations (partners) from our region to inform the accessibility planning exercise that we are working on as required by the *Accessible British Columbia Act*.

The CoT and the Regional District of Kitimat–Stikine (RDKS) put out a call to the public for advisory members (advisors). Advisory membership strives to include and consult with persons with disabilities and the organizations that support them to understand the accessibility needs. The committee also invites participation of members that identify as Indigenous. Together this group of partners and advisors form the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee (JAAC).

The committee's main goal is to address accessibility issues in different areas of our organizations and remove barriers that may prevent people with disabilities from full participation.

The committee members support each other in developing plans to improve accessibility within their own organizations. They also support the development of ways for the public to give feedback on barriers to accessibility and solutions to address these barriers so that partners can better understand the needs of the people they serve.

The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee:

- believes that decisions that affect people with disabilities should include the input of those individuals. The committee is diverse and provides a representation of the people living in our region.
- is committed to making sure our community is accessible to and inclusive for everyone who lives, works, plays, and visits, including people with disabilities and diverse abilities.

Vision

"Ours is a community that is diverse in membership, inclusive of the abilities and needs of all citizens, where everyone can participate meaningfully and fully."

Commitment Statement

The City of Terrace is committed to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers across its services, programs, communications and engagement, and infrastructure to benefit the community in a way that respects the dignity and independence of disabled persons.

The City of Terrace values the contributions from all people and believes diversity strengthens our community. The City of Terrace recognizes the essential knowledge and perspectives of people with lived experience of disability and commits to making sure those voices are part of community planning.

The City of Terrace will work to ensure staff and Council are aware of their roles in supporting accessibility for people living with disabilities and will support positive community attitudes and practices to improve accessibility.

Descriptions and Principles

Barriers to accessibility can affect everyone, but they particularly impact individuals with disabilities and their families. These barriers stop people with disabilities from fully and equally participating in society.

To help our communities better understand accessibility and disability, there are some important terms we're using in our Accessibility Plan. These definitions come from Disability Alliance BC and the BC Accessibility Hub.

- Accessibility means how easy it is for people to use and enjoy programs, services, and environments, enabling everyone to participate fully in society without facing obstacles.
- Barriers refers to anything that prevents a person with an impairment from fully and equally participating in society. Barriers can be found in or caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and may be influenced by different forms of discrimination.
- Disability refers to the inability of a person to fully and equally participate in society due to the interaction of an impairment and a barrier.

- Impairment refers to limitations in a person's physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive functioning, which can be temporary, permanent, or come and go.

Models of Disability

Our Accessibility Plan includes person-first language and language that is based on a social model view of disability, which helps us understand and describe accessibility and disability in an inclusive way.

The traditional medical model of disability sees people as disabled because of their impairments or differences. It focuses on fixing the disability itself as the main problem and doesn't consider the individual's personal experience or promote inclusive ways of living.

On the other hand, the social model of disability believes that disability is not solely caused by an individual's impairments, but by how our society is organized. It aims to remove barriers for people with disabilities that limit the independence, choice, and control in their lives. These barriers can be physical, like inaccessible environments, or attitudinal, like negative perceptions towards people with disabilities. According to this model, society should adapt and become more inclusive to accommodate people's disabilities or diverse abilities, rather than expecting individuals to change to fit into an inaccessible world.

In the plan, we use a combination of person-first language, such as "person or people with a disability" and social model described identify-first language, such as "disabled person." We do this to respect and acknowledge a variety of preferences and perspectives when discussing disabilities.

Accessibility Principles

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* has some important principles that organizations must follow when creating or updating their accessibility plans. We used the definitions from the foundation document of the BC Framework for Accessibility Legislation. These definitions support the rights of people with disabilities, along with the principles set by the province for accessibility.

- **Adaptability:** Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility concepts can change overtime as services, technology, and attitudes towards disability advance.
- **Collaboration:** Accessibility plans should encourage organizations and communities to work together. Making communities accessible is a shared responsibility, and everyone has a role to play in promoting access and inclusion.
- **Diversity:** Accessibility plans should recognize that people with disabilities come from various backgrounds and have unique characteristics, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and life experiences. It's important to acknowledge and consider these differences when creating accessibility plans.
- **Inclusion:** Accessibility plans should reflect that all residents of British Columbia, including those with disabilities, can fully participate in and be treated equally within their communities.
- **Self-Determination:** Accessibility plans should help people with disabilities feel confident and in control of their own decisions, so they can live the lives they want.
- **Universal Design:** Accessibility plans should be designed in a way that meets the needs of all people, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or other characteristics. This means creating spaces, products, and services that are usable by everyone.

By following these principles, organizations can contribute to a more accessible and inclusive British Columbia, where everyone has equal opportunities and rights.

Focus Areas

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* identifies eight accessibility standards or focus areas for inclusion:

- employment
- delivery of services
- the built environment
- information and communications
- transportation
- health
- education
- procurement

Our JAAC chose to focus on “**Information and Communications**” as our first area of focus. This standard looks at the barriers that people face when they interact with others, signage, printed materials, or technology like websites and documents.

We are dedicated to making sure that everyone in our community can access and understand the information we provide. This first phase of our first accessibility plan focuses on finding and reducing barriers to accessible information and communication within our organization and the communities we serve.

By setting standards and taking action in this area, we will better ensure that everyone can get the same information in ways that suit their needs.

Barriers to accessible information and communication can occur when people with disabilities are left out because they have or use different ways of communicating; for example:

- Using small print or not providing large-print versions of materials.
- Creating web pages that cannot be read by screen readers.
- Not using closed captioning for videos, events, or meetings.

- Not having information available in sign language.

Next Steps

The City of Terrace will continue to work internally and with the JAAC to build on actions within the Information and Communications area of focus, and to identify the next priority areas in which to focus our planning efforts.

We continue to work with the JAAC and the public to address needs within additional areas of focus as described in the B.C. legislation. We commit to evolving our City of Terrace Accessibility Plan accordingly.

Resources

The City of Terrace is aware of funding through SPARC for accessibility plan implementation. The City has identified priority areas for funding within the Actions and Implementation section of this Accessibility Action Plan Report. Additional funding opportunities will be explored and, as appropriate, sought in support of the CoT Accessibility Plan – Phase 1.

Actions and Implementation

Disabled persons may experience barriers in participating in local government activities when information is provided in an inaccessible format or without the communication supports they need. This makes it difficult for them to access services, get information, attend events, and join discussions.

Goal – Phase I

To ensure that all residents—regardless of their abilities—have access to City services, programs, communications, and engagement opportunities.

Action Plan

Our action plan breaks down into three priority action areas for accessible public information and communication. Each of these areas is detailed with observed barriers, actions, accountable departments at the City, and targeted completion timeline.

Priority Area #1: Accessible Content

Barrier	Actions	Department (s)	Targeted timeline*
<p>Public-facing delivery of information</p> <p>Potential issues with the level of accessibility (visual, auditory, intellectual) of public information being disseminated and delivered, including online, print, customer service information, and signage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide training in best practices (specific to this focus area) and tools for delivering accessible information to City staff responsible for producing, procuring, or delivering public information and communications. ○ Investigate and offer training across identified areas of need. ○ Apply for funding to support capacity through SPARC and other funders as appropriate. 	<p>Internal Accessibility Working Group</p> <p>Cross Dept</p>	<p>Q 2 & 3 - 2024</p>
<p>Internal written documents (procedures, policies, and general information)</p> <p>Layout of content, clarity of language, and modes (methods) of communication are inconsistent and at reading levels that may</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review key City of Terrace documents through an accessibility lens. ○ Review key departmental documents through an accessibility lens. 	<p>Internal Accessibility Working Group</p> <p>Cross Dept</p>	<p>Q2 - 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

<p>be difficult for all to access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assess readability of key internal-facing documents to ensure we are following best practices for reading levels. ○ Investigate best practice and offer staff training across identified areas of need. ○ Apply for funding to support capacity through SPARC and other funders as appropriate. 		
<p>Front desk and customer service</p> <p>Physical barriers may impede communication across counters. Clarity (tone, volume, speed, etc.) of staff to public may be challenging for persons with varied levels of ability to understand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Best practices review. ○ Provide in person or online staff training. 	<p>Internal Accessibility Working Group</p> <p>Cross Dept</p>	<p>Q4 – 2023</p> <p>Implementation initiated Q1 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Signage posted to communicate public information may not be accessible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop guidelines for accessible signage. ○ Review existing for content, visual, and other access. 	<p>Internal Accessibility Working Group</p>	<p>Nov 2023</p> <p>Q1 – 2024</p> <p>Q1 – 2024</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add signage identifying accessible options for building entry and navigation. ○ Utilize JAAC for consistent materials development, posting, and distribution. 		Ongoing
<p>Accessibility-relevant information for posting on City bulletin boards/sites (upcoming events, awareness content, etc.) is not always well laid out and/or up to date.</p>	<p>Working with interested members of the JAAC and/or a sub-committee to generate content and review content for visual and other access for posting at all City display spaces.</p> <p>Utilize JAAC for consistent materials development, posting, and distribution.</p>	To be determined	<p>Initiate by January 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

* Subject to budget approval

Priority Area #2: Accessibility for Public Communication and Engagement

Barrier	Actions	Department (s)	Targeted timeline*
<p>Public meeting/space accessibility</p> <p>Public meetings/space and engagement efforts may not be reaching or available to all citizens due to accessibility challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create public meeting accessibility through establishing a checklist of accessibility needs for City-sponsored/ provided public meetings. ○ Where identified as a priority, increase access to public buildings/space (i.e., Terrace Public Library) by increasing accessible parking spaces. ○ Seek funding through SPARC for increasing access to public space through increasing parking accessibility at public buildings/spaces. ○ Make Council meetings more accessible through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed captioning. • Train staff and Council members on best practices for clear speaking. 	<p>Cross-dept. through Internal Accessibility Working Group</p>	<p>Jan 2024</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider additional formats/platforms.◦ Utilize Engage Terrace as a feedback mechanism.◦ Generate additional feedback options for more fulsome and accessible engagement.		
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* Subject to budget approval

Priority Area #3: Further Efforts/Meetings to Identify Additional Areas of Need, Priorities, and Actions

Barrier	Actions	Department (s)	Targeted timeline*
City communications and engagement may not be adequately capturing community feedback on needs and opportunities to address them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure staff is aware of and follow posts on barriers, needs, and solutions. ○ Generate additional options for gathering community feedback. ○ Accessibility Services Canada Training. 	<p>Communications</p> <p>Cross-dept. through Internal Accessibility Working Group</p>	<p>Initiate Oct 2023</p> <p>Ongoing Years 1 and 2</p>
Additional areas of focus, barriers, and solutions need to be identified over the upcoming two years to ensure that the CoT Accessibility Plan continues to address accessibility needs within the jurisdiction of the City of Terrace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continued meetings and discussion with internal accessibility planning team of CoT and JAAC to identify additional opportunities for improving accessibility. 	<p>Cross-dept. through Internal Accessibility Working Group</p> <p>Internal Accessibility Working Group with JAAC</p>	<p>Initiate October 2023</p> <p>Ongoing Years 1 and 2</p>
Financial capacity to implement options for reducing and preventing barriers to accessibility is limited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seek opportunities for access to funding to implement actions of the CoT Accessibility Plan. 	<p>CoT Internal Accessibility Working Group</p>	<p>Ongoing Year 1</p>

* Subject to budget approval

Monitoring

Responsibilities

The City of Terrace Accessibility Plan is overseen by Council and implemented by City staff. The City Manager holds responsibility for the overall direction of staff in accordance with the Accessibility Plan and will operate at the direction of Council with input from the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. At their discretion, the City Manager may assign the responsibility for implementing various aspects of the Accessibility Plan to specific staff members.

Reporting

The City of Terrace Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every three years in accordance with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. Updates will be informed by input from the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee, the City's Internal Accessibility Working Group, the public through the Engage Terrace engagement platform*, and other means of public engagement as they are developed as part of Phase 1 of the City's Accessibility Plan.

The Accessibility Plan will be a standing item on the JAAC agenda. Updates on the Accessibility Plan will be provided to the public via the City of Terrace's online assets and via Council through reports submitted by the JAAC as appropriate. The frequency of these reports will be annual or as deemed appropriate by the Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee and Council.

*Engage Terrace (accessibility statement) <https://engage.terrace.ca/accessibility>

More Information

If you would like to know more about our Accessibility Plan, you can get in touch with cityhall@terrace.ca.

You can also find our Accessibility Plan on our website at terrace.ca/accessibility.

To provide feedback on the Accessibility Plan, visit Engage Terrace at engage.terrace.ca/accessibility-plan.




If you want a standard or accessible version of this document, you can request it for free from the Administration Department at 250-638-4712 or engage@terrace.ca.





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