



District of Kent Accessibility Plan

2023

INTRODUCTION

We all collectively benefit from accessibility and inclusion. The purpose of this Accessibility Plan is to provide actions that identify, remove, and prevent barriers to individuals who live, work or play within the District of Kent (the 'District'). These actions further the District's effort to make its built environment, services, and workplace accessible and welcoming to people of all ages and abilities. The Accessibility Plan also helps the District meet the Accessible British Columbia Act requirements, which came into effect on September 1, 2022.

The actions proposed in the Accessibility Plan are intended to educate staff and provide them with the necessary assessment tools to identify, eliminate, and prevent barriers. These actions will be taken when (and as) resources allow and opportunities arise. The Plan may be reviewed and amended as new information becomes available.

COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

The District is committed to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers across its services, programs, and infrastructure, to benefit the community in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

The District values the contributions from all people, and believes that diversity strengthens our community. We recognize the essential knowledge and perspectives of people with 'lived experience' of disability and commit to making sure those voices are part of community planning and decision making.

The District will ensure that staff and Council are aware of their roles in influencing accessibility for people with disabilities and accept their responsibility to support positive community attitudes.

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY

The following terms are important to help all of us grasp the importance of the District's Accessibility Plan:

Accessibility: Having programs, services and environments that enable everyone to participate fully in society without barriers.

Accommodation: The employer's responsibility under the B.C. Human Rights Code to tailor the workplace to meet the needs of the individual employee. The purpose of accommodation is to provide inclusion, equitable treatment and dignity for all employees.

Barrier: Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment.

Disability: An impairment whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not. An impairment, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

PRINCIPLES (ACCESSIBLE BRITISH COLUMBIA ACT)

The Act includes a list of principles that the District gave consideration while developing this Accessibility Plan. These same principles were used to develop the legislation itself. The following are excerpted from the foundational document - BC Framework for Accessibility Legislation.

Inclusion: All British Columbians, 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.

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 form the experiences of individuals. Accessibility plans should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the diversity within the disability community.

Collaboration: Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Accessibility plans should create opportunities for organizations and communities to work together to promote access and inclusion.

Self-determination: Accessibility plans should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.

Universal Design: The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design defines Universal Design as “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.” An accessibility plan should be designed to meet the needs of all people who wish to interact with the organization.

FEEDBACK MECHANISM

In addition to the efforts of the AASC to establish the plan, the committee proposed a community survey to elicit feedback from a broader range of stakeholders within the District. The initial survey will help supplement the ideas coming forward to identify barriers in our community.

The public will have the opportunity to provide ongoing feedback by visiting the Municipal Hall at 7170 Cheam Avenue, by calling 604-796-2235 or via email at info@kentbc.ca. Concerns can also be reported by visiting our website at kentbc.ca

TYPES OF IMPAIRMENT

Intellectual impairments are significant reductions in a person's ability to understand new or complex information and to learn and apply new skills. Intellectual impairments result in a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning). These impairments begin before adulthood and have lasting effects on development.

Mental illness is the reduced ability for a person to function effectively over a prolonged period. This is for several reasons including: significant levels of distress; changes in thinking, mood or behaviour; feelings of isolation, loneliness and sadness; and feelings of being disconnected from people and activities.

Neurocognitive disorders are a wide range of disorders that affect the brain. These features acquired cognitive decline in one or more cognitive domains. These disorders may result in issues with thinking, reasoning, memory and problem solving.

Neurodivergent is a non-medical term to describe people whose mind functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of "normal." These individuals may or may not be diagnosed with a medical condition or identified as having a disability. Neurodivergence can be either genetic and innate or produced by brain-altering experiences, or some combination of the two. People may also have neurocognitive functions that diverges in multiple ways, which would be described as multiply neurodivergent.

Physical impairments may result in disabilities that affect mobility, flexibility, dexterity and pain.

Sensory impairments may result in disabilities that affect a person's ability to see or to hear.

TYPES OF ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS

Physical/Environmental: Resulting from building design, smells/sounds, lighting, shape of rooms, size of doorways, etc.

Attitudinal: Attitudes of District staff and the community, including discriminatory behaviours and lack of disability awareness.

Communication: How information is received in person, by telephone or online, interacting with staff, etc.

Information: Signage, brochures, forms, manuals, websites, etc.

Policy or Practice: Rules, regulations and protocols that help/prevent a person from participating in society.

Technological: Resulting from lack of assistive technologies.

Transportation: Relating to transportation including side walks and roadways.

Economic: Affordability of District run programs and services.

GOALS

DISTRICT OF KENT ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



1 ASSESS AND IMPROVE ALL MUNICIPAL OWNED FACILITIES AND GROUNDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY

**INCLUSIVENESS
ACCESSIBILITY**

2 CREATE THE EXPECTATION FOR EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR DISTRICT STAFF, ELECTED OFFICIALS, FIRST RESPONDERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**INCLUSIVENESS
DIVERSITY
ACCESSIBILITY**

3 RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND COLLABORATION WITH OUR FIRST NATION'S NEIGHBOURS AND COMMUNITIES

**INCLUSIVENESS
DIVERSITY**

4 IDENTIFY PRIORITY POPULATION COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING

**INCLUSIVENESS
DIVERSITY
ACCESSIBILITY**

5 EXPLORE AND IDENTIFY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

**INCLUSIVENESS
DIVERSITY
ACCESSIBILITY**

6 SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE SERVICE PARTNERS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO PLAY THEIR PART IN CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

**INCLUSIVENESS
ACCESSIBILITY**

GOAL ONE

ASSESS AND IMPROVE ALL MUNICIPAL OWNED FACILITIES AND GROUNDS FOR ACCESSIBILITY

OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS	DEPARTMENT / PARTNER
Inventory park paths and playgrounds for barriers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop inventory 2. Survey all sites 	Parks Recreation
Inventory recreation and civic facilities for barriers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop inventory 2. Survey all sites 	Recreation Public Works
Assess these barriers and develop a program to address them in all categories	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Budget estimate 2. Prioritize 3. Budget process 	Public Works Recreation Finance
Develop policy and procedures to ensure accessibility to all existing and new infrastructure and services provided by the District and its partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop policy 2. Develop procedure (how to review) 3. Include Accessibility Committee (see Goal 4) 	Public Works Recreation Finance Administration
Review the District's website to make it more available and accessible	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Best practices review 2. Implement improvements 	Corporate Services
Develop a survey and feedback mechanism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey for response to plan 2. Develop feedback mechanism 3. On-going process 	Corporate Services

GOAL TWO

CREATE THE EXPECTATION FOR EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR DISTRICT STAFF, ELECTED OFFICIALS, FIRST RESPONDERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS	DEPARTMENT / PARTNER
Research existing education and training programs to identify gaps and opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canvas other municipalities and associations on training opportunities and providers 2. Determine duration, on-site vs. online 	Administration Human Resources
Prioritize funding for Equity Diversity Inclusion (EDI) training in annual budget process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add to departmental budgets 	Administration Human Resources Finance
Create and communicate an education strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify working groups 2. Organize a course schedule 	Administration Human Resources
Facilitate education and training sessions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hire consultant/contractor/trainer 2. Form class groups 3. Schedule classes and book venues 	Administration Human Resources

GOAL THREE

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING AND COLLABORATION WITH OUR FIRST NATION'S NEIGHBOURS AND COMMUNITIES

OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS	DEPARTMENT / PARTNER
<p>Info share with neighbouring First Nation's Communities on Accessibility Plan drafts to ensure no gaps are left</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather names and contact information of Lets'emot Community to Community Forum communities to share information. 2. Present Accessibility Plan and Survey at C2C meeting 	<p>Administration</p>
<p>Review Truth and Reconciliation Commissions "Calls to Action", Declaration on the United Nations Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDRIP) to create opportunities to follow these guidelines</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review documents and summarize opportunities. 2. Review with Accessibility Committee 	<p>Administration</p>
<p>Create or enhance opportunities for collaboration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work closely and collaboratively through Lets'emot Community to Community Forum 2. Work together with neighbouring communities on special events 3. Collaborate on bilingual signage (park signage, waysigns) and pronunciation videos (website) 	<p>Administration Recreation</p>

GOAL FOUR

IDENTIFY PRIORITY POPULATION COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING

OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS	DEPARTMENT / PARTNER
Identify priority population community members	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forum of stakeholders 2. Follow up for gaps 	Community Services, MCFD, RCMP, Agassiz-Harrison Healthy Communities
Use the District website and social media outlets as resources for Equity Diversity Inclusion (EDI) information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post the Action Plan to website and weblinks to other sources 	Corporate Services
Diverse representation in decision making, planning, policy and procedure creation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select members on Advisory Committees. 2. Review TOR for all committees 	Administration
Consider forming an Accessibility Advisory Committee to meet and support identified accessibility goals and future needs or requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Terms of Reference 2. Council to select members and chairs 	Administration
Improve the District's engagement strategy and policies through an Equity Diversity Inclusion (EDI) lens	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Best practices review 2. Draft policy for Council approval 	Administration

GOAL FIVE

EXPLORE AND IDENTIFY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS	DEPARTMENT / PARTNER
Develop District budget that would meet objectives of this action plan and/or community driven Equity Diversity Inclusion (EDI) initiatives	1. Include new areas in annual budget process	Finance Public Works Recreation
Secure program funding for accessibility	1. Explore grant opportunities to support District (or partner) to fund accessibility projects	Finance Public Works Recreation
Secure funding for EDI initiatives	1. Explore grant opportunities to support District to enhance EDI initiatives	Finance Human Resources

GOAL SIX

SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE SERVICE PARTNERS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO PLAY THEIR PART IN CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS	DEPARTMENT / PARTNER
Help inventory “partner” facilities for barriers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide District examples of inventory spreadsheets and surveys 2. Advocate and support for grant funds 	Fraser Valley Regional Library, Agassiz-Harrison Museum, lease holders
Assist partners with reducing barriers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide expertise and support services 2. Advocate and support for grant funds 	Fraser Valley Regional Library, Agassiz-Harrison Museum, lease holders
Provide local businesses information about accessibility and inclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop information pamphlet and weblinks designed to assist business 2. Distribute with Business License applications and renewals annually 	Harrison-Agassiz Chamber of Commerce

GLOSSARY

Accessibility: The degree to which a product, service, program, or environment is available to be accessed or used by all.

Adaptability: The capacity to be modified for a new use or purpose to become more accessible.

Barriers: Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with a disability.

Designated Groups: Women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

Disabilities: An inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier.

Diversity: The inclusion of different types of individuals who have an array of identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, perspectives and experiences that are representative of Canada's current and evolving population.

Employee: A person employed by the District of Kent.

Inclusion: The act of including someone or something as part of a group.

Indigenous Peoples: A collective name of the original peoples of North America and their descendants with a focus on the District of Kent's closest neighbours of Cheam First Nation, Seabird Island and the independent communities of Sts'ailes and Sq'ewlets First Nation.

Infrastructure: Physical structures and facilities operated by the District of Kent.

Members of Visible Minorities: Persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

Workplace: Place where District of Kent employees commence work.