

Accessibility and Inclusion Select Committee
Agenda
May 15, 2023 at 3 p.m.
Council Chamber, 2675 Dunsmuir Avenue



1. **Approval of Agenda**
2. **Adoption of Minutes: March 20, 2023** 3
3. **Unfinished Business – For Discussion**
 - 3.1 Review and Update of Committee Work Plan 6
 - 3.2 2023 Committee Budget
 - Training: \$1500 – explore any training or learning opportunities for the Committee
 - Meeting costs: \$100
 - 3.3 Facility and Infrastructure Accessibility Review – Monitor and support recommendations 9
4. **Unfinished Business – For Information**
 - 4.1 Road and Pedestrian Improvements Design: 2023 Capital Project - First Street, Dunsmuir to Penrith 14
 - Updated design showing parking space
5. **New Business**
 - 5.1 Official Community Plan review and Transportation Master Plan, Plan Your Community Street Event - May 24, 2023, 12 Noon to 7pm on Third Street

Connect Cumberland engagement platform:
<https://connectcumberland.ca/>
 - 5.2 Regional Accessibility Framework: 15

The Village is participating in the collaborative development of a regional accessibility framework, which may be referred to the Committee at the July meeting.

The Village will also enter into an agreement along with other regional local government partners for the Comox Valley Social Planning Society for the services of a regional Accessibility Committee along to meet the Accessible BC Act requirements for an accessibility plan and a committee

that meets the membership composition required by section 9 of the Accessible BC Act:

(2) An accessibility committee must, to the extent possible, have members who are selected in accordance with the following goals:

- (a) at least half of the members are
 - (i) persons with disabilities, or
 - (ii) individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities;
- (b) the members described in paragraph (a) reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in British Columbia;
- (c) at least one of the members is an Indigenous person;
- (d) the committee reflects the diversity of persons in British Columbia.

Once the framework is completed this fall, each local government will develop its own accessibility assessments and action plans, which Council will discuss during 2024 budget development.

- 6. Reports from committee members**
- 7. Upcoming meetings:** Third Monday every second month.
July 17, 2023 at 3 p.m.
- 8. Adjournment**

**The Corporation of the Village of Cumberland
Accessibility and Inclusion Select Committee Minutes**



**March 29, 2023 at 3 p.m.
Council Chamber, 2675 Dunsmuir Avenue**

Members Present:

Rhianna Walz, Acting Chair
Suzanna Wong
Jaye Mathieu
Brenda Lenahan
Troy Therrien, Councillor

Regrets:

Judy Norbury, chair

Staff Present:

Rachel Parker, Corporate Officer
Joel Clarkston, Engineering Technology

The Committee determined that Ms. Walz would chair the meeting.
Ms. Walz called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

- 1. Approval of Agenda:** Therrien/Mathieu. Carried
- 2. Adoption of Minutes:** Therrien/Mathieu. January 16, 2023. Carried.
- 3. Recommendations to Village Staff**
 - 3.1 Feedback on Road and Pedestrian Improvements Design: 2023 Capital Project - First Street, Dunsmuir to Penrith**
Presented by Joel Clarkston, Engineering Technologist

Mr. Clarkston presented this capital project that is expected to be constructed early summer 2023. Mr. Clarkston reported that the design is in line with the design standards of local governments in BC and similar to Third Street design with curb extensions and pedestrian crossing bump outs with concrete scoring. Staff use American accessibility standards for pedestrian crossing letdown scoring.

Discussion took place on letdown, widened sidewalks, location of reserved parking spot on First Street and letdown to be determined at final design stage, slopes and grades of roadway also to be determined at final design, future phases of First Street improvements to the north, parking stall standards, ensuring contractor completes project as designed,

Discussion on placement on designated parking stall. Drawings are preliminary and location may depend on final grading to determine whether on East or West side of First Street. It was noted the sidewalk and traffic congestion during peak times related to facilities in the area.

Discussion took place on an opportunity to pave the rear access to the Cultural Centre used as a pedestrian entrance to the facility.

Members were asked to provide feedback to staff within the next ten days.

4. Unfinished Business – For Discussion

4.1 Checklist for Accessible and Inclusive Events

- Make available on Village website. Share with Cumberland Business Association. Notice in Currently Cumberland. News post on website. Share with Arts and Culture Society directly. Follow up with Recreation whether checklist is being shared with special event permits. Share with Ingrid at Weird Church, UROC and Cumberland Community School Society. Share on Cumberland Bulletin Board once posted on cumberland.ca.
- Connecting with school on Accessibility Committee. Suzanna to connect with Cumberland Trustee.

4.2 Liaison with the Cumberland Business Association to encourage and support owners of existing public and commercial buildings in making accessibility improvements to the built environment

Discussion on keeping in contact with the Cumberland Business Association to share information on inclusion and accessibility with the members.

4.3 Review and Update of Committee Work Plan

- Review Work Plan to mark tasks “complete”
- Discussion on parks and trails review through Tourism Vancouver Island. Access by Design. Brenda to explore.
- Adaptive mountain biking trails.

4.4 2023 Committee Budget

- Explore any training or learning opportunities for the Committee with \$1500 budget, options may include GotoHr, Tourism Association, online modules,
- Share CV Community Health network events

5. Unfinished Business – For Information

5.1 Display of “Everyone Welcome” stickers approved by Council

- Now displayed at public Village facilities

- 5.2 Facility and Infrastructure Accessibility Review – Monitor and support recommendations
- Noted Green and Inclusive Buildings – Federal Program
 - Inquire about accessible picnic tables – Rachel
 - Village Park washroom and field house – Rachel to check on design budget
 - To continue at next meeting
- 5.3 For Information: To promote social and political equity as follows: Participate in reviewing the Village of Cumberland’s draft plans, policies and procedures to prevent the creation of barriers in the future.

Upcoming community engagement or referrals:

- Official Community Plan Update (development permit guidelines)
- Climate Action Plan
- Solport Park continued development
- Transportation Master Plan
- Lake Park Traffic Management plan
- Lake Park Shoreline Detailed Design in 2025

Discussion on beach mats and demonstration. Rachel to pass along to parks staff.

- 5.4 Future of Committee
- April: Council to establish strategic priorities and broad overarching goals to guide allocation of Village resources
 - May: Council to consider Accessibility Plan and role of Accessibility and Inclusion Committee

4. New Business

None

5. Reports from committee members

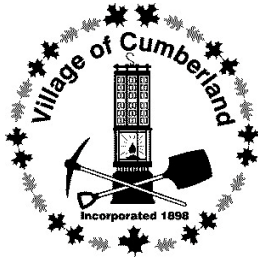
None

6. Upcoming meetings: Third Monday every second month.

- May 15, 2023 at 3 p.m. – look at terms of reference before May meeting. And why each in on committee.
- Discussion on where committee is headed. Need clear direction from Council on role and what to accomplish. Contributing more to the committee and getting things done. Each member has their own expertise. Good engaged people

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 p.m.



Corporation of the Village of Cumberland

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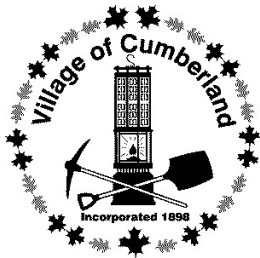
File No. 0540-20
Jan 9 2023

Accessibility and Inclusion Committee - Work Plan

	Approved Task	Status	Next Steps
1.	To make recommendations to Council on a strategy to encourage and support owners of existing public and commercial buildings in making accessibility improvements to the built environment and to create environments that are inclusive to all community members.	In progress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribution by mail through business licence data – Completed 2019 2. hand deliver to downtown businesses – completed 2019 3. Recognize accessibility improvements at 2019 June Accessibility Day 4. Liaise with business community through CBA 5. Liaise with CBA on mapping project to identify accessible businesses
2.	Review of community event manual with recommendations to make events more accessible; and outreach with special event coordinators.	Complete	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Community Event Manual - completed 2. Make recommendations for staff review – completed 3. Outreach with event coordinators spring 2020 once new manual available – delayed by COVID restrictions 4. Create Checklist for event organizers – complete
3.	Consult with emergency planning staff on accessibility and inclusion and provide resources on emergency preparedness.	Complete	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Met with regional emergency support services: Sep 24 2018 2. April 15 2019 tour of emergency reception centres: CRI & CC 3. Provided communication boards to CVEP ESS in 2019
4.	Explore and investigate accessible tourism, and parks and trails mapping	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rick Hansen rating complete for South Colliery Trails and Chinatown Walking tour • Trails Coordinator to undertake adaptive MTB trail assessment and feasibility – 2018: An a-MTB trail

	<p><i>The Facility and Infrastructure Accessibility Review</i> recommendations:</p> <p>a) Continue to identify two or three potential pilot sites to help to expand the current network of accessible trails</p> <p>b) Consider developing trail profiles similar to the approach adopted by the Capital Regional District and make this information available at the local tourist office.</p>		<p>requires a specific type of terrain that may not exist on Village property and may impact CCF covenant. For private land, UROC would need capacity to be partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brenda to explore Access by Design • Invite UROC to meeting? Re: adaptive mountain biking trails.
5.	Recognize businesses and community members who are engaging in efforts to make Cumberland a more inclusive and accessible place to live and visit.	In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with CBA to recognize businesses for a fall 2022 target date • Revisit in fall 2023 – connect with CBA.
6.	Monitor and support recommendations of the 2016 Facility and Infrastructure Review	In Progress	See buildings and facilities tracking sheet.

7.	To promote social and political equity as follows:		
	Identify barriers to social inclusion and accessibility and make recommendations as to how to remove these barriers;		- Work on this in the future
	Identify best practices in other communities and make recommendations based on the findings to promote social and political equity;		- Work on this in the future
	Participate in reviewing the Village of Cumberland's draft plans, policies and procedures to prevent the creation of barriers in the future;		
	Draft a strategy for engaging with the community on issues relating to accessibility and inclusiveness;		
	Work with Council to increase public awareness on issues related to accessibility and inclusion for all citizen		



Corporation of the Village of Cumberland

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File No. 0730-01
February 22, 2019

Facility and Infrastructure Accessibility Review December 2016

Village Office	Status
a) Make design changes and improvements to the entrance of the Village Office to make it more accessible. Ideally this would include changes to the doorway (wider) and the ramp.	Renovation of municipal office and fire hall budgeted for 2021/2022 through amenity and borrowing. RHF assessment in January 2019.
b) Consider lowering a portion of the service counter in the Village Office to make it more accessible for someone using a wheelchair.	
c) Consider retrofitting one of the existing washrooms in the Village Office to make it universally accessible.	Completed Dec 2017
d) Make improvements to the current designated accessible parking space that is located in front of the Village Office. This includes changes to make the surface more level as well as changes to ensure that there is a safe, level, clear path of travel from the accessible parking space to the entrance of the Village Office.	Budgeted for 2019. Completed.
e) While minor modifications can be made to the existing accessible parking space located in the front of the Village Office, major changes would have to be considered at the time that the road in front of the office is re-constructed. This will result in better design.	Long term future project
Council Chambers	
No recommendations have been made at this time in terms of further design changes or enhancements to Council Chambers.	No action required
Cultural Centre and Cumberland Museum (Entrances)	
a) Continue to explore the alternatives to improve the overall accessibility of the entrances to both the Cultural Centre and Cumberland Museum (both front and back).	Complete. Museum ramp reconstruction with grant funding in 2017. Automatic doors installed to Cultural centre January 2019.
b) Consider retrofitting the back entrance of the Museum as an interim measure to make it more accessible until such time as the planning and redesign of the front entrances to the Cultural Centre and Cumberland Museum is completed (estimated to be 3 to 5 years).	Redundant with 2017 entrance work (Options B-D)

c) Add signage to the Cumberland Museum to redirect people who use mobility aids to the alternative accessible entrance including the back entrance to the Museum if changes are made and/or to the alternate entrance that is currently available through the back entrance of the Cultural Centre	
d) Add a door bell to the back entrance of the Museum to allow patrons to alert someone that they are at the back entrance and that they would like to enter. The same should be done if the Village continues to use the Cultural Centre as the alternate entrance to the Museum.	
Interior Spaces in the Cultural Centre and Cumberland Museum	
a) Consider purchasing a portable aluminum ramp for the stage in Moncrief Hall to allow for a wider range of activities and opportunities for people who require a ramp to access the stage.	Ramp removed 2020 to make more space for recreation programming.
b) Review alternatives available to improve the accessibility of the accessible washroom in Moncrief Hall.	No action. Accessible washroom signage removed. RHF assessment in Jan 2019 – No recommendations for this washroom.
c) Work with staff at the Cumberland Museum to improve the internal pathways and circulation routes in the Museum to ensure that the interior spaces in the Museum are accessible (especially the pathway to the elevator).	Museum reno 2021.
d) Develop a brochure that outlines the accessibility features of the Cultural Centre and Cumberland Museum and make this brochure available in the local tourist information centre.	No action
Cumberland Recreational Centre	
a) That the future planning and redesign of the west wing of the Recreation Centre continue to take into consideration specific accessibility-related enhancements including changes to the service area, the entrance as well as the inclusion of a fully accessible washroom.	East washroom renos in 2018 with Rick Hansen funding – postponed due to asbestos. Automatic front doors installed January 2019. 2023 – rec staff looking for 2024 budget for interim washroom renos
Cumberland Village Core	
a) Continues to work together to look at ways to ensure that the Village Core continues to be as accessible as possible.	Accessible parking improvements budgeted for 2018 and 2019. Parking improvements in the Accessible Parking Plan.
b) Continue to look at ways to remove barriers and to introduce changes that will help to enhance and support the flow of pedestrian traffic and ensure that the sidewalk spaces in the Village Core continue to be as accessible as possible.	PW moved Rotary bicycle parking to the outside of sidewalk as schedule permits; concrete

	access to Village Square picnic table in 2016. Engagement with CBA on maintaining sidewalk corridors.
c) Continue to identify ways to engage local businesses in conversations about ways to ensure that the local restaurants, shops, services and businesses are as accessible as possible for residents as well as for those visiting the community.	Business brochure distribution in 2018 and 2019. Recognition program in 2019.
Local Parks and Greenways	
a) Continue to identify two or three potential pilot sites to help to expand the current network of accessible trails	Assessment of “destination” trails completed by RHF in January 2019.
b) Consider developing trail profiles similar to the approach adopted by the Capital Regional District and make this information available at the local tourist office.	Accessibility Committee task to prepare for grant opportunity for web-based portal. Budgeted for 2020 through grant funding.
Village Park	
a) Continue with the implementation of the Village Park Master Plan including the addition of walkways and pathways through the Park.	Family area pathways installed fall 2017; accessible picnic table installed in 2018. Field house replacement outstanding.
b) Add benches and rest areas at reasonable intervals (ideally 30 metres) throughout the park to allow for passive engagement and enjoyment of each of the different activity areas.	Through bench donation program – to be launched in 2020+ (?). Program requires more consideration to identify location of benches and bench standards.
c) Continue making improvements to the community interface and entrances to the Village Park both along Dunsmuir Avenue and along Sixth Street including the addition of sidewalks, walkways and pathways where possible.	2017 family area improvements included improved Village Park entrance at Sixth and Dunsmuir, as well as a sidewalk and two new accessible parking stalls on Sixth Street (line painting scheduled for summer 2018). Proposed parking improvements include long-term project of a mid-block space on Dunsmuir between Sixth and Seventh, which would require Dunsmuir Ave interface redesign/ramp.

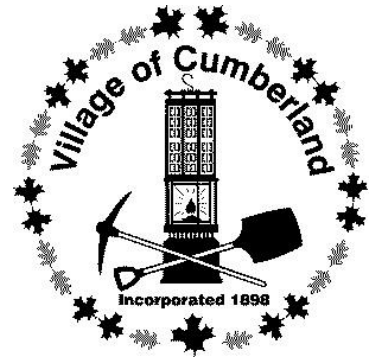
Street Parking

- That all of the standard designated parking spaces be a minimum of 3.7 metres wide including a transfer access aisle of 1.2 metres in keeping with the requirements set out in the BC Building Code;
- That any van accessible parking that is added follow the technical standards set out in Appendix A of this report and include a minimum dimension of 3.4 metres wide with a transfer aisle of 1.5 metres for a total width of 4.9 metres.

Designated Accessible Parking (Cultural Centre and Cumberland Museum)	
a) Consider adding two designated accessible parking spaces on First Street beside the Village Museum for use by individuals who have health and activity limitations and who are visiting the Museum or conducting business at the Village Office.	Long-term project in the Accessible Parking plan. Incorporated into 2023 First Street reconstruction.
Designated Parking by the Village Park	
a) That the two designated accessible parking spaces that were removed at the time that the sewer infrastructure upgrades were made to Dunsmuir Avenue be replaced;	Replaced with spots on 6 th Street. Proposed long-term parking improvements include a mid-block space in Dunsmuir between 6 th and 7 th . Replacing accessible parking spaces in same location deemed undesirable since the ramp location would require wheelchairs and other wheeled users to go into the road.
e) Consider the addition of two or three designated accessible parking spaces on Sixth Street including van accessible parking and that this parking be located close to the different activity areas including the family area, the playing fields and the dog park;	These spaces are in the Accessible Parking plan, to be installed as budget permits.
Designated Accessible Parking	
f) That all of the designated parking spaces should be clearly marked by the international symbol of people with disabilities on each of the spaces as well as through the addition of signage clearly indicating that these spaces are only to be used by individuals who have a valid disability parking permit.	Signage and painting budgeted in 2018 and 2019. Standards to be reviewed.
a) Make improvements to the designated accessible parking space located on Dunsmuir Avenue in front of the Village Office including making changes to the surface to make it more level and to ensure that there is a safe, clear, and accessible path of travel to the Village Office;	Completed in 2019.
b) Add additional designated parking by making the first parking space on each of the cross streets along Dunsmuir Avenue as a designated accessible parking space beginning on the east	Completed 2019.

side of Dunsmuir Avenue and alternating down both sides of Dunsmuir Avenue to Sixth Street	
c) Retain the designated accessible parking spaces on Dunsmuir Avenue that are currently located outside of the medical office as well as the designated accessible parking that is currently located outside of the bank;	Complete
d) Replace the two designated accessible parking spaces that were located on Dunsmuir Avenue outside of the Legion as well as the two designated accessible parking spaces that were located at the entrance to the Village Park;	Completed 2019.
f) Consider adding two designated accessible parking spaces on First Street beside the Village Museum for use by individuals who have health and activity limitations and who are visiting the Village Museum or conducting business at the Village Office.	Long-term project in the Accessible Parking plan. Incorporated into 2023 First Street reconstruction.
g) Consider entering into an Agreement with SPARC BC to become a regional partner in the delivery of the Parking Permit Program for People with Disabilities.	Considered in by Council in 2017; to be reconsidered in future when Municipal Hall accessibility improved and staff resources allow

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT



REPORT DATE: April 3, 2023
MEETING DATE: April 24, 2023

File No. 3710

TO: Mayor and Councillors
FROM: Rachel Parker, Corporate Officer
SUBJECT: Accessibility Plan

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee recommend that Council participate in the collaborative development of a regional accessibility framework provided that socio-economic and political inclusion and diversity are not excluded by the framework and enter into an agreement with Comox Valley Social Planning Society for the services of a regional Accessibility Committee along with other regional local government partners.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council on the requirements for local governments under the new *Accessible British Columbia Act*, offer options to Council to meet those requirements for discussion and feedback to staff, and present a recommendation that the Village work collaboratively with the Comox Valley Regional District, area municipalities, and the regional Accessibility Committee to develop an Accessibility Framework that will be an overarching guidance document for the development of future Village accessibility and inclusion assessment and action plans.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Date	Resolution
July 11, 2021	THAT Council approve the incorporation of the above tasks into the scope of work of the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee; THAT Council allocate \$2500 in the 2022 budget for a public event to promote social equity and inclusion; THAT Council direct staff to include an amount in the 2022 budget discussions for the development of an accessibility and inclusiveness community strategy; and THAT Council recruit new members to the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee with a specific invitation to youth, BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ2+ residents.

Dec 12, 2016	THAT Council approve the Village of Cumberland Facility and Infrastructure Accessibility Review.
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BACKGROUND

The Accessible BC Act came into force in 2021. The Act provides a legal framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in B.C. The Act requires identified organizations, such as local governments, to establish an accessibility committee and an accessibility plan, and a mechanism for feedback on accessibility. Local governments in B.C. must comply with these requirements by September 1, 2023.

ACCESSIBLE BC ACT REQUIREMENTS

Accessibility Plan

An organization's accessibility plan must outline how the organization will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people in the organization or interacting with it. "Barriers" include physical barriers in the environment, and also include barriers caused by communication, technologies, practices, policy, and attitudes. In development or updating an accessibility plan, an organization must consider these specific guiding principles: Inclusion, Adaptability, Diversity, Collaboration, Self-determination, and Universal design. The Act does not require organizations to implement physical upgrades to facilities and buildings.

Accessibility Committee Consultation

An accessibility plan must be developed in consultation with an accessibility committee as the development of the plan is intended to be informed by people with lived experience with disabilities. The accessibility committee would provide advice to the organization on the accessibility plan and how to remove and prevent barriers. To the extent possible, the committee must have at least half of its members be persons with disabilities or represent a disability-serving organization, and members should also reflect the diversity of British Columbians and include Indigenous peoples.

The Province has provided funding to the Disability Alliance of BC, which has created guidance through an online accessibility hub and created a guide to developing an accessibility plan.

Flexibility in Approach

The purpose of an accessibility plan is to integrate accessibility into the planning work that organizations are doing. The Province has framed requirements of the Act flexibly and organizations can use one of a variety of strategies and determine the content of their own plans to meet the requirements, including

- using an existing plan and committee,
- adapt an existing plan, or
- establish a plan and committee with another organization.

THE VILLAGE'S WORK ON ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

Council first established the Accessibility Committee in January 2015 as an advisory committee to Council. The Committee was tasked with making recommendations on a 10-year accessibility plan for Village facilities and infrastructure, and a strategy to encourage and support owners of existing public and commercial buildings in making accessibility improvements. This goal was drawn from universal design policy statements in the 2014 Official Community Plan:

- Public spaces, facilities, services and places of employment shall be accessible to people of all abilities.
- The Village will encourage business partners, governments, and employers on public and private lands to improve the physical accessibility of their property and facilities.
- Provide adequate designated parking for people with disabilities.

The [Facility and Infrastructure Review](#) was completed in December 2016 and provides information on

- Census data on individuals living with health and activity limitations and the diversity of needs of those individuals,
- the guiding principles of inclusion, the values of inclusive spaces and places, participation in community, and making intentional choices,
- the benefits of the use of universal design

The Review has guided staff in upgrades to Village facilities and infrastructure and has made an impact on how Village staff approach their work. Many of the recommendations for improvements and enhancements included in the Review have been implemented, some through specific projects, e.g. automatic doors at the Cultural Centre and Recreation Centre, reserved parking spaces, trail improvements. Many improvements have been made as part of larger upgrade projects, e.g. Dunsmuir Avenue reconstruction, Museum renovation, Village office reception renovation. Some improvements remain outstanding, and would require significant infrastructure and facility upgrades to effectively make these improvements. e.g. field house in Village Park, washrooms at the Cumberland Recreation Centre.

Regional Accessibility Framework

Due to the number Village priorities in late 2022 and in 2023 relating to completing existing priorities, staffing, and the election of a new council, the Village did not have capacity to consider the requirement of an accessibility plan in 2023. In the interim, the Comox Valley Regional District has proposed the development of a regional Accessibility Framework in consultation with regional municipal partners, including the Village.

The regional Accessibility Framework will be a high level document that would use the required specific guiding principles in its development: inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination and universal design. The Framework will identify types of barriers and the provision for each local government to develop its own assessments and action plans. If approved by the CVRD Board, \$15,000 in funding from the CVRD General Administration Service would be allocated to the development of the Accessibility Framework.

In the attached report, CVRD staff made the following recommendation to the CVRD Board:

A collaborative approach whereby:

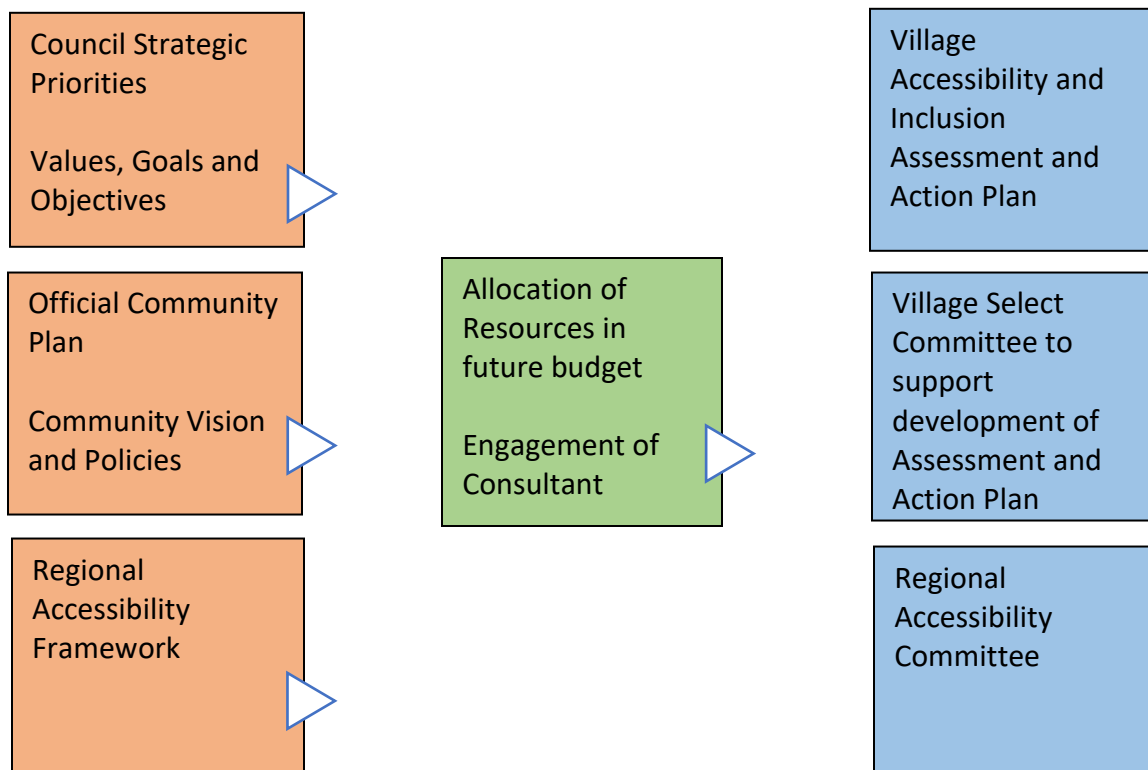
- i. A single accessibility framework is developed by the CVRD, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and Village of Cumberland that describes shared principles relating to accessibility and inclusivity across the Comox Valley.
- ii. Based on the collective framework of shared principles, each local government will be responsible for the development of their action plans.
- iii. Engagement with the Committee and Cumberland's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee provides content and input to the accessibility framework

The CVRD proposes a funding model and agreement with the Comox Valley Social Planning Society to provide administrative support and collaboration with the regional Accessibility Committee on its meeting on April 18. The agreement proposes \$20,000 be provided annually from the CVRD General Administration Service for the administration of the regional Accessibility Committee. If approved, the regional Accessibility Committee would be adequately resourced and positioned to meet the requirement of an accessibility committee under the Accessible BC Act.

The regional Committee as well as the Village's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee would be collaborative partners in the development of the Accessibility Framework. The Village would be a signatory to the service agreement to have the opportunity to consult with the regional Accessibility Committee on issues of accessibility and inclusion. The Village is already a participant in the service that would fund the committee.

Village Staff have been consulted by the CVRD and given feedback on the proposal and generally in agreement with the proposal of an Accessibility Framework as it would provide a guiding document that is based on the specific requirements and guiding principles of the Accessible BC Act and would be in place by required date of September 1, 2023. The Village is a participant in the CVRD general administration service and already contributes to funding that service through requisition. The Framework would allow the Village time to complete its strategic plan, update its community vision in the Official Community Plan, allocate resources to develop its own assessment and action plan, and to consider the role of the Village's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee.

While the guiding principles of an accessibility plan include inclusion and diversity, the legislation focuses on addressing barriers to people with disabilities. In recent years, Council has identified importance of socio-economic and political equity through the terms of reference of the Village Accessibility and Inclusion Committee, and Council's priorities for a healthy community through affordable housing opportunities. Staff believe by participating in the regional accessibility framework that the Village would not be limited in choosing to include policy and acting to address socio-economic equity in its assessment and action plan, if it so wished. However, staff have included a clause in the staff recommendation to give Council comfort that the framework would be developed to not limit this future option.



ALTERNATIVES

Given that Cumberland is a small community with limited capacity and resources, which is recognized as a limitation in the guide for developing an accessibility plan, Council could consider using the 2016 Facility and Infrastructure Review and the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee to meet the requirements of the Accessible BC Act. The Village would need to establish a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility by the September 1, 2023 date, and it would also be necessary to expand the membership of the committee to meet the membership composition requirements that at least half the members be people with disabilities or representing a disability-serving organization and have one member who identifies as indigenous.

At some point the Village should review the plan and consider policies addressing how barriers to accessibility are approached by the Village.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

- X Healthy Community
- Quality Infrastructure Planning and Development
- Comprehensive Community Planning
- Economic Development
- Reconciliation

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to participating in the regional accessibility framework as the Village already contributes to the General Administration service. Financial resources would be expected to be required to engage a qualified consultant to develop an assessment and action plan in future years. No budget has been allocated in 2023 for any identified projects in the Committee's terms of reference.

OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff currently provided limited administrative support for the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee ([view terms of reference](#)). If the Village were to proceed with an assessment and action plan in future years, additional staff resources would be required to administer that project.

ATTACHMENTS

1. CVRD report on Comox Valley Accessibility Framework and *Accessible British Columbia Act*

CONCURRENCE

None

Respectfully submitted,

R. Parker

Rachel Parker
Corporate Officer

M. Mason

Michelle Mason
Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 12, 2023

FILE: 3710-01

TO: Chair and Directors
Regional District Board

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: **Comox Valley Accessibility Framework and *Accessible British Columbia Act***

Purpose

To introduce the proposed approach to respond to the *Accessible British Columbia Act* by developing an accessibility framework and working with the community’s accessibility committees.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District Board support the development of a Comox Valley Accessibility Framework in partnership with member municipalities and community partners as described in the staff report dated April 12, 2023.

Executive Summary

- The *Accessible British Columbia Act* obligates local governments to establish an accessibility committee, develop an accessibility plan and enable public feedback.
- Staff from the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and Comox Valley municipalities are proposing a collaborative approach to respond to the legislation and engage with existing accessibility committees.
- The resulting accessibility framework will be based on shared principles relating to accessibility across the Comox Valley.
- Based on the collective/regional framework, each local government will be able to undertake further action plans that may result in investments to reduce or remove barriers to programs and services.

Prepared by:

J. Warren

James Warren
Deputy Chief
Administrative Officer

Government and Community Interests Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

Comox Valley Accessibility Committee	✓
City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and Village of Cumberland Chief Administrative Officers	✓

Background/Current Situation

- The *Accessible British Columbia Act* requires that municipalities and regional districts:
 - Establish an accessibility committee;
 - Develop an accessibility plan; and
 - Establish a process for receiving public feedback.
- The Accessible British Columbia Regulation prescribes the above actions for municipalities and regional districts (and others) effective September 1, 2023.
- Compliance and enforcement measures are not yet in force; however, when those measures come into force, provincial inspectors can investigate, and non-compliant organizations will be subject to fines of up to \$250,000.
- The Comox Valley Accessibility Committee (Committee) has operated since 1998 to educate and raise awareness about accessibility issues, be a resource for accessibility information, and advocate for improved accessibility, primarily at the local level.
 - <https://cvsocialplanning.ca/accessibility-committee/>
- From 1998 to 2017/18, the Committee operated through Courtenay Recreation. In 2020 the Committee and the Comox Valley Social Planning Society (Society) formed a collaborative relationship to further their mutual work. The Society received funding from the CVRD to provide administrative support for the Society and Committee.
 - The CVRD provided funding to the Committee (through the Society) in 2021 (\$15,000) and 2022 (\$20,000) as part of a two-year commitment to support social planning activities and the administration of the Committee. The Board supported a request by the Society for an additional grant of \$20,000 in 2023 for the general government service.
- The Village of Cumberland has established the Accessibility and Inclusion Committee.
 - <https://cumberland.ca/accessibility-select-committee/>
- CVRD staff have discussed the legislative obligations and opportunities for collaboration with the Committee and municipal staff.

Options

The following options are identified for consideration:

1. A collaborative approach whereby:
 - i. A single accessibility framework is developed by the CVRD, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and Village of Cumberland that describes shared principles relating to accessibility and inclusivity across the Comox Valley.
 - ii. Based on the collective framework of shared principles, each local government will be responsible for the development of their action plans.
 - iii. Engagement with the Committee and Cumberland's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee provides content and input to the accessibility framework.
2. An independent approach where the CVRD would undertake its own efforts to develop an accessibility plan for CVRD interests only. Engagement with the Committee would solicit content and input for CVRD activities. Each municipality would also be required to undertake their own efforts to respond to the *Accessible British Columbia Act* legislation.

Staff are recommending option 1, the collaborative approach.

A collaborative approach would include a joint agreement between the Comox Valley local governments and the Society that would:

- a) Define roles and responsibilities:

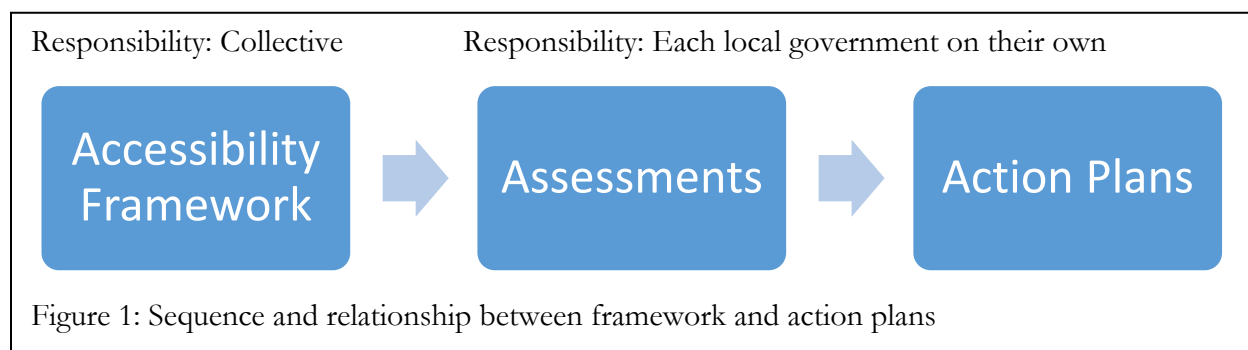
- i. Identify the interaction between the Comox Valley local governments and the Committee – illustrate the values that the regional approach provides to all jurisdictions.
- ii. Account for public engagement opportunities focused on committee membership input, review, and further engagement beyond the Committee when possible.
- iii. Describe the Committee membership that strives for compliance with the legislation (notably, the Act states the Committee must “to the extent possible” include members who are persons with disabilities or represent organizations that support persons with disabilities, reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in BC, reflect the diversity of persons in BC and include one indigenous person).
- iv. Specify that inputs and outcomes are tied to individual jurisdictions; no single jurisdiction assumes implementation activities for the entire Comox Valley.
- v. Provide funding to the Society to administer the Committee.

Attached as Appendix A is a draft agreement that has been circulated through local government staff and the Committee for feedback. Provided the Board supports this approach, a joint agreement between the Comox Valley local governments and the Society would be pursued. This report has been distributed to each local government for awareness and to support their own accessibility initiatives, including the eventual assessments and action plans. Should this collaborative approach be supported, CVRD staff will work closely with local government staff to review documentation and protocols leading toward the framework.

A collaborative approach will result in an accessibility framework for the Comox Valley that would generally include the following:

- Guiding principles (inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design);
- Relationship between the local governments and the accessibility committees;
- The consultation process to build the framework in relation to the accessibility committees and those in the community with disabilities; frequency, and method of engagement between local governments and the accessibility committees will be described;
- Barrier identification (employment, service delivery, built environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education and procurement);
- Provision for each jurisdiction to undertake assessments related to barriers and build action plans;
- Regular reporting and updates.

The work proposed in this report, combined with future assessments that result in specific action plans, can be graphically shown in Figure 1.



To develop the accessibility framework, CVRD staff propose a dialogue with the Committee and local government staff. Additional dialogue may be provided with Cumberland’s Accessibility and

Inclusion Committee. The dialogue would explore each framework chapter and incorporate a broad range of perspectives. The municipalities would be represented through assigned staff to similarly share a local government perspective and incorporate specific feedback related to civic operations and service delivery.

Financial Factors

Under the collaborative approach, funds are identified in the general administration service to:

- a) Provide support to the Society to assist with administering the Committee (\$20,000); and
- b) Engage with consulting services to develop the framework as required (\$15,000).

As the general administration service includes participation by all electoral areas and member municipalities, it serves as an equitable method to support the operation of the Committee in its service to all jurisdictions.

The support to the Society is partly in response to its request for funding and to advance the works required under the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. The \$35,000 in funding is included in the general administration service for a couple of reasons: the CVRD does not currently have another service that extends across the entire regional district and includes all jurisdictions, and the Act mandates local governments to undertake this work. If a non-collaborative approach is sought, each jurisdiction would need to fund this work on its own.

Depending on the outcome of this work, ongoing funding for the Committee may be contemplated and could continue to be funded from general administration for the reasons noted earlier.

For the CVRD, where capital or other investments are required or specific audits undertaken, staff would propose that individual services cover future costs. For example, if an accessibility audit for the CVRD’s recreation facilities is needed, the recreation complexes service would be expected to cover the audit costs and any resulting expenses. Similarly, where a municipality considers future audit work or capital investments, that municipality would need to cover those costs. For example, the Accessibility Committee is undertaking an audit with the Social Planning and Research Council of BC and is funded by the Community Health Network. Where appropriate, the outcome of this audit may be applicable for a local government to help identify actions. However, this particular audit would not require specific actions unless supported by the local government.

Strategic Considerations: Strategic Drivers and Regional Growth Strategy

CVRD Board Strategic Drivers:							
Fiscal Responsibility	✓	Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection	✓	Community Partnerships	✓	Indigenous Relations	✓

Accessibility planning can be considered to identify and remove barriers in an organization’s policies, programs, practices and services and to prevent new barriers from emerging. In this sense, accessibility planning can be considered to support all of the Board’s drivers, given its broad scope and impacts.

CVRD Regional Growth Strategy Goals:							
Housing	✓	Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks	✓	Local economic development	✓	Transportation	✓
Infrastructure	✓	Food Systems	✓	Public Health & Safety	✓	Climate Change	✓

Similarly, accessibility planning can describe and provide for improvements across the eight Regional Growth Strategy goals.

Intergovernmental Factors

Discussions have been initiated with staff from each municipality and the Committee. Staff have indicated support for a collaborative approach and will be bringing forward reports to their respective councils seeking approval of the approach. The accessibility framework could include the following:

- Broad, Comox Valley-wide principles and statements for local government; and
- Individualized approaches for Courtenay, Comox, Cumberland and the CVRD to allow for future action plans related to specific infrastructure, services and programs.

Citizen/Public Relations

In addition to developing an accessibility plan, the *Accessible British Columbia Act* also requires the local government to establish an accessibility committee and provide public input to the accessibility plan. The Committee has existed since 1998, and the CVRD is proposing a partnership to advance the goals of the legislation. That partnership, combined with the already active efforts by the Committee to engage with people with lived experience, the business community and other interested parties, can strengthen the outcomes associated with this work. However, the accessibility committee would not be the sole means of soliciting feedback. From the CVRD staff’s perspective, and following discussion with Accessibility Committee members, a broad public engagement is not being recommended through the development of the framework for a couple of reasons. The public, at large, may not place due emphasis on accessibility and inclusivity. Able-bodied individuals do not typically recognize barriers to services, programs or infrastructure. As such, a targeted engagement through the Committee and its network of organizations will yield a more representative response from people with lived experiences.

As assessments are undertaken and action plans are developed, broad public feedback may be sought by individual jurisdictions. Courtenay, for example, may use its annual survey as a mechanism for soliciting additional public feedback.

Attachments: Appendix A – Draft Agreement with Comox Valley Accessibility Committee

AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made this day of , 2023.

BETWEEN:

Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD)
770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, B.C, V9N 0GB

City of Courtenay
830 Cliffe Avenue Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7

Town of Comox
1809 Beaufort Avenue Comox, BC V9M 1R9

Village of Cumberland
2673 Dunsmuir Avenue Cumberland BC V0R 1S0

AND:

Comox Valley Social Planning Society
c/o Lewis Centre 489 Old Island Highway Courtenay, BC V9N 3P5

hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Parties"

WHEREAS:

- A. The Comox Valley local governments are responsible for providing local government regional and community services and infrastructure and include:
 - The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD);
 - The City of Courtenay;
 - The Town of Comox; and
 - The Village of Cumberland;
- B. The Comox Valley Social Planning Society is a registered non-profit society in the Province of British Columbia formed to provide information to individuals, organizations and policymakers to advocate for and guide the development of social planning strategies throughout the Comox Valley;
- C. The CVRD Board, at its sole discretion, has provided funding to the Comox Valley Social Planning Society to, in part, administer an Accessibility Committee that works to increase accessibility and social inclusion to make the Comox Valley a place for everyone to belong;
- D. The Accessibility British Columbia Act (the "Act") requires that all local governments develop an accessibility plan, establish an accessibility committee and provide for public feedback to the plan;

- E. In recognition of the importance of clear roles, responsibilities and expectations to drive successful outcomes, the Parties wish to formalize a collaborative arrangement whereby annual financial support for the administration of the Accessibility Committee is maintained under certain terms and conditions that enable the CVRD and its member jurisdictions to meet their obligations under the Accessibility British Columbia Act for the establishment of an accessibility committee.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and the mutual covenants and conditions herein contained, the Parties hereby agree as follows:

1. The CVRD shall provide funding to the Comox Valley Social Planning Society in the amount of \$20,000 per annum during the term of this agreement to, in part, administer and support the operation and functioning of the Accessibility Committee in accordance with the agreement.
2. The Accessibility Committee shall act as a resource and provide advice to the CVRD and its member municipalities to support the advancement of accessibility and inclusion within the Comox Valley in accordance with, and in the spirit of, the Accessible British Columbia Act.
3. The CVRD and its member municipalities shall be entitled to meet regularly with the Accessibility Committee according to a mutually agreed schedule to support the development and implementation of an accessibility framework.
4. The Parties recognize that the accessibility framework is intended to be an overarching guidance document for Comox Valley local governments that:
 - a) is developed through the full participation of the CVRD, Village of Cumberland, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and the Accessibility Committee;
 - b) includes, and gives consideration to, the guiding principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design; and
 - c) guides the development of further assessments or action plans by the individual jurisdictions that may identify barriers in employment, service delivery, built environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education and procurement.
5. The Accessibility Committee shall establish and maintain a terms of reference which, amongst others, provides for membership expectations, standards of conducts and committee composition which, to the extent possible, strives for the following in accordance with Section 9 of the Act:
 - a) at least half of the members are:
 - i. persons with disabilities, or
 - ii. individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, persons with disabilities;

- b) the members described in paragraph (a) reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in British Columbia;
 - c) at least one of the members is an Indigenous person;
 - d) the committee reflects the diversity of persons in British Columbia.
6. The Accessibility Committee shall:
 - a) Serve as one method of public feedback on accessibility and inclusion in the Comox Valley;
 - b) Use their networks to solicit additional feedback / participation, where appropriate as part of its work with CVRD and its member municipalities;
 - c) Engage with accessibility and inclusion-related community organizations and groups; and
 - d) Consider opportunities for further collaboration amongst all local government entities.
7. As a public body, the CVRD must comply with statutory obligations under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act concerning personal information and providing access to information under its control. The Comox Valley Social Planning Society acknowledges and agrees to provide reasonable assistance to the CVRD in complying with its statutory obligations under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
8. This Agreement shall remain in full force and effect from the date of execution until December 31, 2023.
9. In entering into this Agreement, the Parties also express their intention to enter into a subsequent three-year agreement with consideration to a review of the accessibility framework and the other related work of the Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized officers as follows:

COMOX VALLEY SOCIAL PLANNING SOCIETY Signed by: _____ Date: _____
CITY OF COURTENAY Signed by: _____ Date: _____
TOWN OF COMOX Signed by: _____ Date: _____
VILLAGE OF CUMBERLAND Signed by: _____ Date: _____
COMOX VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT Signed by: _____ Date: _____