



Staff Report to Council

DATE: Monday, October 21, 2024

DEPARTMENT: Legislative Services

SUBJECT: Accessibility Plan for the City of Langford from the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee (the “Committee”) has produced the first Accessibility Plan in accordance with the *Accessible BC Act*. The Accessibility Plan includes an overarching plan as well as individualized plans specific to the municipality’s needs and initiatives. Each member municipality will be receiving their specific plan from the Committee before the end of 2024.

BACKGROUND:

At its Regular Meeting held November 6, 2023, Council considered the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, accessibility progress update, and next steps in facilitating the launch of the inaugural Accessibility Plan initiative.

With the City hosting the Committee for the first year and providing all administrative duties, the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee (CWAAC) has met five times (four regular meetings and one special meeting).

COMMENTARY:

The Accessible BC Act sets out a series of areas that an Accessibility Plan should consider. In consultation with the Province, it was determined that the focus of the inaugural Accessibility Plan would be on service delivery and employment, the same two issues focussed on by the Province.

Prior to commencing work on the Accessibility Plan, the Committee undertook two surveys – the first being to seek input as to how people wanted to be engaged, which ran from December 8, 2023, to January 31, 2024, and the second to identify barriers to municipal service delivery and employment that individuals may face, which ran from March 1, 2024, to April 7, 2024. Responses were received from nearly 350 people. This work then formed the basis for CWAAC’s next steps of facilitated public engagement through a consultancy with lived experience.

This firm, Changing Paces, led three in-person and four online engagement sessions in July 2024, adapting an originally scheduled in-person session to an online session to accommodate the Sooke

Area Wildfire challenges and adding an additional online session to ensure sufficient opportunities for public participation. The table below outlines the date, time and location of these engagement sessions:

Date and Time	Location
July 16, 2024 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Virtual
July 18, 2024 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Virtual
July 22, 2024 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Colwood City Hall
July 23, 2024 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Langford Legion
July 24, 2024 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Virtual
July 25, 2024 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion
July 26, 2024 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Virtual

Changing Paces presented their report, including recommendations to CWAAC at a Special Committee meeting in early September 2024.

The Changing Paces report, a review of the survey responses provided, and discussions with staff form the basis of the draft Accessibility Plan appended to this report as Attachment 1. The other partner municipalities in the Committee are utilizing the same opening and closing sections, however the core of the plans are specific to each of the municipalities.

The City of Langford specific plan sets out the identified issues, what we have done to date to address those issues and plans for the future to further mitigate accessibility issues or to avoid them from the outset.

The next steps will see the draft Accessibility Plan posted on the City’s website and made available at City Hall for public review and comment. The Plan and comments received will then come back to Council for consideration at a future meeting so that a final Accessibility Plan can be put in place, as set out in the *Accessible BC Act*. The Accessibility Plan will serve as the tool for accessibility-related service delivery and employment improvements in the City as we work toward becoming a barrier-free community.

As set out in the Terms of Reference, the CWAAC is nearing the point in time where it will transition to be a group comprised of community representatives. Advertisements for one (1) citizen representative have been placed in the Goldstream Gazette with additional information available on the website and the City’s social media channels. The posting will close at 4:00pm on October 23, 2024. While this is Langford process, each of the partner municipalities will undertake its own appointment process throughout October, November, and December. This timeline should see a new Committee in place for the first quarter of 2025, coinciding with the start of the City of Colwood’s assumption of the annual hosting responsibilities. An amended Terms of Reference is provided as Attachment “2” to this report, updated to reflect a joint community committee composition.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The partner municipalities that form the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee have agreed to equally share the cost of developing this plan into an accessible and editable document. The City of Langford offered to oversee this process and retained the services of Eclipse360 to produce a professional document that can be edited and provided to all member municipalities and posted digitally on the City website.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

In accordance with the *Accessible BC Act*, the municipality is required to produce an Accessibility Plan in order to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. This plan must be reviewed every three years. While this inaugural plan focuses on Employment and Service Delivery, the Committee will assist the municipalities in developing a plan that addresses all areas identified in the legislation over time.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

6g – Develop and Implement an Accessibility Plan

OPTIONS:

Option 1

THAT Council receive the City of Langford’s Draft Accessibility Plan in partnership with the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee;

AND

THAT the document be made available for public inspection at City Hall and on the City’s website.

SUBMITTED BY: Nisa Johnston, Legislative Services Administrative Coordinator

Concurrence: Melisa Miles, Manager of Legislative Services

Concurrence: Donna Petrie, Senior Manager of Communications & Economic Development

Concurrence: Yari Nielsen, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities

Concurrence: Matthew Baldwin, RPP, MCIP, Director of Development Services

Concurrence: Leah Stohmann, RPP, MCIP, Director of Community Planning and Climate Change

Concurrence: Katelyn Balzer, P.Eng., Director of Engineering and Public Works

Concurrence: Michael Dillabaugh, CPA, CA, Director of Finance

Concurrence: Marie Watmough, Director of Legislative and Protective Services

Concurrence: Braden Hutchins, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Concurrence: Darren Kiedyk, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Draft Accessibility Plan - (City of Langford)

Attachment 2: Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference