



Memo to: Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee
From: S. Jones, Corporate Officer, Town of View Royal and CWAA Committee Member
Date: April 10, 2024
Re: Municipal Accessibility Network – *Accessible BC Act* Standards

One of the benefits of attending any conference is the networking. While at the March 27 and 28, 2024 Accessibility Professional Network 2024 annual in Vancouver, I met an employee from the City of Penticton who informed me of the Municipal Accessibility Network and invited me to a virtual meeting of the Network.

I attended a Network meeting on April 9 and received information from two Provincial representatives, Krissi Spinoza and Sam Turcott, regarding work that the Province is doing on *Accessible BC Act* standards. Specifically, the Province is focusing on standards for service delivery and employment accessibility and, while these standards would be implemented first at the provincial level, they indicated the standards would eventually filter down to local governments and other organizations (for example, school districts) as well.

The following are the slides that were provided during the presentation from Ms. Spinoza and Mr. Turcott that I wanted to share with the Committee:

Update on Accessibility Implementation



April 2024

Municipal Accessible Network



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Introduction

Accessibility Directorate, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Generic email - EngageAccessibility@gov.bc.ca

Sam Turcott, ADM – Sam.Turcott@gov.bc.ca

Krissi Spinoza, Director of Policy – Krissi.Spinoza@gov.bc.ca



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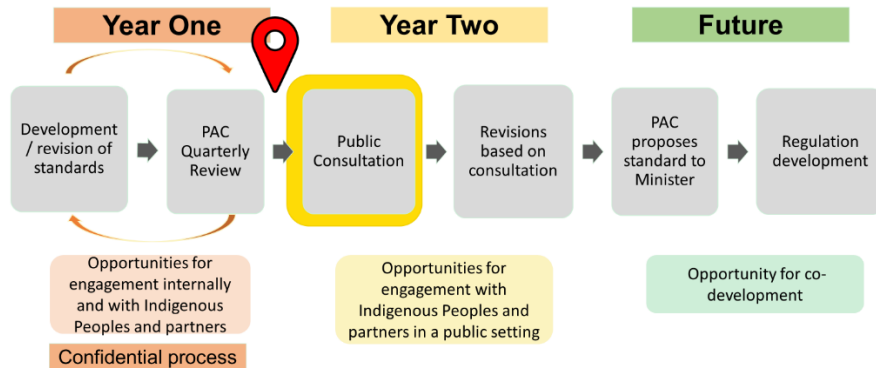
Overview of the Accessible B.C. Act

- Part 2 – Recognition and Accountability
 - SPARC funding for [AccessAbility Week](#)
 - [Annual reports](#) and independent reviews
- Part 3 – Accessible Organizations
 - Committee, plan and feedback
- Part 4 – Accessibility Standards
 - Accessible Service Delivery; and
 - Employment Accessibility
- Part 5 – Compliance and Enforcement
- Part 6 – Reconsiderations and Appeals



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Accessibility Standards Development Roadmap



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Service Delivery Standard

- The goal of the Accessible Service Delivery standard is to ensure that events, activities, advice and the process of buying goods are provided in accessible ways that ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities.
 - Aims to address barriers including physical, communication, policy and attitudinal barriers many experience when accessing goods and services.
 - This standard will likely apply broadly to organisations in the public and private sectors.
- Topic areas for this standard include:
- Alternatives
 - Documentation
 - Evidence
 - Assistive Devices
 - Guide and Service Dogs
 - Support Persons
 - Accessibility Representatives
 - Training and Recording Training
 - Availability and Maintenance of Accessibility Features and Services
 - Disruption of Services
 - Physical Environment
 - Virtual Environment
 - Self-service Interactive Devices
 - Emergency response
 - Communications
 - Events
 - Discounts and fees
 - Safety and Security



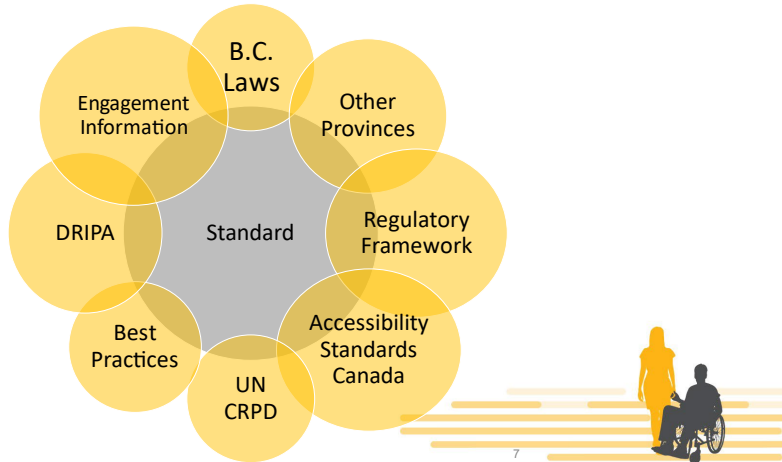
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Employment Accessibility Standard

- The goal of the Employment Accessibility standard is to identify, remove and prevent barriers in hiring, training and retention.
 - Aims to support employers to develop inclusive work environments.
 - This standard will likely apply broadly to organizations in the public and private sectors.
- Topic areas for this standard include:
- Policies & practices
 - Unions
 - Leave, benefits and compensation
 - Communications
 - Training
 - Physical & digital tools & technology
 - Workplace Emergency Response
 - Job Descriptions
 - Recruitment
 - Stay at work/return to work
 - Redeployment
 - Accommodation
 - Onboarding
 - Employee development
 - Discipline
 - Documentation



Standards Context



What can you do to prepare for Accessibility Standards?

- Provide feedback during the public engagement
 - What are you already doing?
 - What are realistic timelines?
 - What will you need extra support to get right?
- Identify the point person/s in your organization and how information can be best communicated for the standards



Complying with the Accessible B.C. Regulation

- Requirements are framed flexibly and organizations have significant discretion coming into compliance
- Various strategies are available to obligated organizations:
 - Organizations that already have a plan, committee, or feedback mechanism in place can rely on those
 - Organizations may adapt an existing plan such as a diversity and inclusion strategy
 - Organizations may establish an accessibility plan or committee jointly with other similar organizations



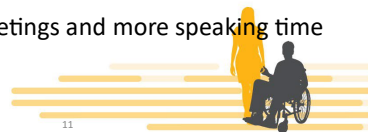
Accessible B.C. Regulation – Best Practices

- Feedback mechanism
 - Translation other languages and ASL
 - Multi-channel
 - Clarity on process and reporting
- Accessibility Committee
 - Compensating people for their expertise
 - Wide recruitment process
 - Accessible meetings



Promising Practices in the Municipal Sector

- Talking books, Library home delivery services, large print books
- Accessibility audits of municipal owned buildings
- Extensive employee and municipal wide survey on accessibility
- Providing training in delivery accessible information to City staff responsible for producing, procuring, or delivering public information and communications.
- ASL Interpretation at Municipal Council meetings and more speaking time allotted for persons with disabilities.



Resources to Support Local Government Accessibility

- \$7.5 million to Rick Hansen Foundation to support accessibility.
- Local governments and Indigenous communities receive:
 - Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) rating for three sites to identify key areas of improvements;
 - Up to \$90,000 for upgrades; and
 - Accessibility awareness training for staff.
- \$5 million to SPARC BC for the Local Community Accessibility Grant Program.
- DABC have created the BC Accessibility Hub



Questions and Discussion

- What are some successes you have accomplished or noticed?
- What other information will support your response during the consultation process?



Links to Resources

- <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/accessiblebcactstandards/>
- www.gov.bc.ca/accessibilityfeedback
- www.bcaccessibilityhub.ca
- www.sparc.bc.ca/areas-of-focus/accessibility-and-inclusion/campaigns/
- www.sparc.bc.ca/partnerships/local-community-accessibility-grant-program/



Thank you!



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In closing, the Province is currently between “Phase 1 - Pre-consultation” (ended March 2024) and “Phase 2 – Public Engagement” which runs May 31 to July 31, 2024. Additional information about what the Province is undertaking as it develops recommendations to form the basis of future accessibility regulations in BC can be found here: [Home - Accessible BC Act Standards \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/accessible/bc-act-standards).