

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL REPORT

Administration

For the June 24, 2024 Council Meeting

DATE: June 18, 2024

File No. 5080-01

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Adam Goodwin

RE: Town of Oliver Accessibility Plan Update

RATIONALE:

To provide Town Council with an update on the development of the Town of Oliver Accessibility Plan, as the Accessibility and Age Friendly Committee nears completion of working towards finalizing the action plan.

OPTIONS:

As the recommendation is to receive this report for information, staff recommend that the Committee of the Whole support the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee of the Whole receive the report titled 'Town of Oliver Accessibility Plan Update' as included in the June 24, 2024 agenda package for information.

RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS:

Pursuant to the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, the Town of Oliver must have an accessibility plan. The Town's Accessibility and Age Friendly Committee has been working on developing a plan over the last few months. This update to Council is to provide the most up-to-date direction of the accessibility plan as the committee works to finalize the plan.

BACKGROUND:

The Accessibility and Age Friendly Committee has been working diligently to develop the Town of Oliver Accessibility Plan. The Committee has been meeting every few weeks to months to identify key elements of the plan. This report is to provide Council with a very brief update on the development of the Town's Accessibility Plan, as the committee nears completion of the plan. An overview is provided in Figure 1 below.



Overview



Figure 1. Overview of the Town of Oliver's Accessibility Plan

The Town's Accessibility Plan will have three major sections:

- An overview on the importance of the work for individuals with all levels of abilities, families, older adults, and everyone in the community,
- The principles of the plan, and
- The specific actions to make Oliver, as a community, and Town assets and infrastructure more accessible.

The importance of this work

The committee recognizes the importance of the Town having an Accessibility Plan. In addition to meeting the new provincial legislation, this work is important as the outcomes of the work

completed under the Accessibility Plan will benefit residents with all abilities, families (e.g., young families with strollers), and older adults. The committee has discussed on several occasions that there are many opportunities to make relatively small improvements to infrastructure, services, and programs that will have a fairly significant impact on individuals with all types of abilities.

The principles (the how) of the plan

Municipalities are required to include principles within their Accessibility Plan in order to guide the implementation of initiatives and projects. The committee used the provincial principles as a starting point for discussions. The six principles the committee identified as being important for informing how to move forward with the implementation of the Accessibility Plan include:

- **Adaptability** – the plan should reflect that Accessibility Plans should evolve as there are new services, technology, learnings, and as attitudes change.
- **Collaboration** – everyone has a role to play. The Town should work with the community, where possible.
- **Diversity** – every person is unique. The plan should acknowledge intersectionality and diversity within the disability community.
- **Inclusion** – all residents of Oliver can fully and equitably participate in the community.
- **Self-determination** – the plan should seek to empower people with disability to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.
- **Universal design** – “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” (The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design).

The actions (the what) to focus on over the next three years

To identify potential actions for inclusion in the accessibility plan, the committee worked on several initiatives:

1. A tour of municipal facilities in the fall 2023,
2. Staff providing a summary of information it had heard through interviews and conversations in the community,
3. A review of the Accessibility Plan from the City of Kamloops in early 2024, and
4. Discussions and sharing experiences in the community.

This process led to approximately 81 potential actions being identified. The committee then worked on identifying a shorter list of actions that would be more likely the Town could accomplish over the next several years. Through this process, 23 items were identified. The committee worked with Town staff to categorize/theme these actions into five categories.

The categories/themes that were identified are:

- **Continuous Improvement** - create a core principle of continually improving the accessibility of the Town's infrastructure and services (e.g., supporting Town staff learning and training, new programs/services),
- **Incorporating Accessibility** – improvements to facilities, infrastructure, and public spaces (e.g., recommendations for specific built infrastructure),
- **Information** – actions that provide connections to information (e.g., information, education),
- **Employment** – actions expected from the Town of Oliver as an employer, and
- **Work with Community Partners** – actions with partners focused on improving accessibility in Oliver.

The table below identifies the categories and which of the 23 actions are most associated with each category.

Category/Theme	Action
Continuous Improvement	Improve inclusion and consultation with persons with disabilities during decision making that may impact them, when making changes, acquiring assets for public use, and designing infrastructure
	Offer opportunities for staff to experience some of the issues that persons with disabilities face on a daily basis (eg. using wheelchairs, vision/hearing impairments)
	Provide training to public-facing staff to improve customer service around accessibility and best practices when serving persons with disabilities (eg. working with clients who have guide dogs)
	Enhance building evacuation plans and drills to include processes (visual and audible) and instructions for evacuation of employees and visitors of all abilities. Provide training to employees on these processes and communicate to visitors
	Municipal Chief Election Officer to ensure accessibility and independence without secondary assistance
	Ensure training offered to employees is accessible to the greatest extent possible
	Include accessibility considerations and implications in the Town of Oliver active transportation plan and Official Community Plan through consultation with the community and the Accessibility and Age Friendly Committee
Incorporating Accessibility	Opportunities to improve accessibility will be considered on all retrofit projects
	Bathroom and toilet height
	Upgrade traffic signals with audible signals
	Evaluate transit infrastructure for adherence to BC Transit Infrastructure Guidelines (eg. stops and exchanges)

Category/Theme	Action
	Strongly consider options to incorporate Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (60–79% level) for all new municipal facilities
	From committee tour: Enhance sound system
	Added during the May 28, 2024 Committee meeting: Accessible parking at Town facilities
Information	Compile accessibility information on all public washroom facilities and integrate it into an accessibility GIS map. Make it available, and in a PDF format for screen readers or text breakdown
	Compile accessibility information on all pathways and trails (with gradients, widths, level of difficulty) and integrate it into an accessibility GIS map, and in a PDF format for screen readers or text breakdown
	Compile accessibility information on all accessible features of parks, accessible pedestrian crossings, and more and integrate it into an accessibility GIS map. Make it available, and in a PDF format for screen readers or text breakdown
	Develop and deliver an awareness campaign for snow removal contractors, the public, and land owners about the importance of snow removal in commercial areas, at pedestrian intersections, on sidewalks and in accessible parking areas
Employment	Educate Town of Oliver staff involved in the hiring process to improve accessibility of the recruitment process
	Identify barriers in the recruitment process and remove and adjust to the greatest extent possible
Work with Community Partners	Research feasibility of a pilot community support driver program or accessible ride sharing service
	Work with BC Transit to expand accessible transit service hours
	Continue developing accessible programs in partnership with community organizations serving persons with disabilities or local chapters of provincial and national organizations

Table 1. Categories/Themes for the Accessibility Plan

Next Steps

Based on the input from the committee to-date, staff are currently finalizing the first draft of the written Accessibility Plan. Additionally, staff are working with the committee on identifying a small action plan that staff can use as a guide for scheduling actions from the Accessibility Plan into various departmental work plans for the rest of 2024, 2025, and into 2026. The current plan is focused on the next three years, and pursuant to the legislation, should be reviewed and updated approximately every three years.

General: N/A

Organizational: N/A

Financial: N/A

Legal/Statutory Authority: Pursuant to the *Accessible British Columbia Act*, the Town of Oliver must have an Accessibility Plan. The Town has created an Accessibility Committee (the Accessibility and Age Friendly Committee) to support the Town with developing the Town's Accessibility Plan.

Strategic Plan: Community Enhancement

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Town of Oliver Accessibility Plan Update.docx
Attachments:	- June 24 Committee of the Whole Presentation - Accessibility.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 20, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Rochelle Lougheed - Jun 20, 2024 - 9:29 AM

Wayne Anderson - Jun 20, 2024 - 9:47 AM