



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Lisa Helps
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6
Via Email: mayor@victoria.ca

February 26, 2019

Your Worship, Mayor Helps,

As many as 55,000 British Columbians use a form of wheeled mobility, whether powered wheelchairs, scooters or manual wheelchairs. This number appears to have increased by 25% in a decade, and expected to increase as our population continues to age, technology continue to increase and facilitate individuals with disabilities to be mobile in their communities. BC is third among Canadian provinces in our population of users of wheelchairs and scooters, and higher than those populations in larger provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Wheelchair accessible parking is an essential piece of community infrastructure that enables people with disabilities to be included and mobile in their communities. With changes made to the BC Building Code last fall, specifically the removal of accessible parking requirements, on December 10th, municipalities became responsible for the regulation of accessible parking. This means of course that municipalities will now need to adopt bylaws that address this for their communities.

Therefore, we are writing to you today to inquire as to whether or not your municipality has a bylaw in place and if so, to please provide us a copy of said bylaw, and if not, to strongly recommend the adoption of a bylaw that references the CSA standard.

The Canadian Standards Association CAN/CSA Technical Standard B651 Accessibility in the Built Environment (CAN/CSA B651) uses a robust omnibus built-environment accessibility guideline that is recognized nationally. The Federal Treasury Board's Accessibility Standard for Real Property policy has required this technical standard for all new and renovated federal government real property, including leased property, since October 1, 2014. This is also the standard used by the Rick Hansen Foundation (www.rickhansen.com/become-accessible) as the benchmark to audit existing facilities and provide guidance in the design phase of new buildings.

It is imperative that accessible parking be built to these standards so that adapted vehicles with ramp access, such as those used by individuals with powered mobility devices such as power wheelchairs and scooters can be accommodated. As individuals with disabilities and as legislators, we are especially interested in this issue and as such also offer any assistance we can to you should you need it. In addition, SPARC BC (www.sparc.bc.ca), has offered to provide assistance to any municipality interested in having more information about the specific types of disabilities and accessibility needs in your community to help support their local planning and decision-making including specific needs around accessible parking. If you are interested in availing yourself of this service, please contact Alfiya Battalova, Manager, Accessibility Initiatives at 604-718-8509.



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We are confident that you and your municipality understand the business case for accessibility. The Conference Board of Canada's The Business Case to Build Physically Accessible Environments, February 2018 suggests that:

- There are 2.9 million Canadians living with a physical disability that impairs their mobility, vision, or hearing, representing 10 percent of the country's population.
- That this number will rise by 1.8 per cent annually over the next 13 years, nearly double the pace of the population as a whole.
- That real spending by this group is set to rise from \$165 billion in 2017 to \$316 billion in 2030, increasing from 14 to 21 per cent of the total consumer market.

So, we are very anxious to receive your response to our inquiry about your bylaws. We believe it is imperative that all municipalities large and small adopt a best-practice standard and work towards ensuring that it is adopted and enforced widely across both new and existing (as possible) infrastructure. Again we offer any assistance we can provide in developing or enhancing your new or existing bylaws in this regard.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Cadieux MLA

Surrey South

Michelle Stilwell MLA

Parksville-Qualicum