

Attachment E: Proposed Accessibility and Inclusion Policy

		ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION POLICY	
CHAPTER:	Corporate Administration		
SUBJECT:	Accessibility and Inclusion Policy		
AUTHORIZED BY:	City Council		
EFFECTIVE DATE:	October 1, 2020	REVISION DATE:	October 2023
REVIEW FREQUENCY:	Every Three Years		

A. PURPOSE

The City of Victoria is committed to accessible and inclusive programs and services to ensure people with disabilities are treated with respect and have equitable access and opportunity to participate in civic engagement activities, able to access information, and use City programs, services, community amenities and infrastructure. The purpose of the Accessibility and Inclusion Policy is to provide guidance to City staff in planning, designing and improving existing programs and services to identify and address systemic barriers. The removal of systemic barriers is integral to City's goal of building an inclusive society with accessible services and programs that contribute to community life in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

B. POLICY STATEMENTS

- The City is committed to providing an accessible environment in which people with disabilities can access the City's services, and facilities, including all buildings, public spaces, information and communications, in a manner that meets their individual needs.
- The City is committed to the identification, removal and prevention of accessibility barriers, including attitudinal, systemic, information, communications and technology, and built environment and physical barriers.
- The City values contributions from residents and visitors and recognizes that diversity and inclusion builds our community through social cohesion.
- The City recognizes the knowledge and perspectives of people with lived experience.
- The City will ensure that staff and Council are aware of their roles in influencing accessibility for people with disabilities and accept their responsibility to support positive community attitudes.
- Actions to be undertaken by the City, and with community partners where applicable, will focus on the following:

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- a) Built Environment: Promoting accessibility in urban policy, design, planning, operations, and development.
 - b) Governance and Services: Removing barriers to and increasing participation in local government programs, services, information, bylaws, and public decision making.
 - c) Capacity and Collaboration: Developing increased corporate capacity to deliver professional services in a more accessible manner, building partnerships with accessibility service providers, and advocating to other levels of government and stakeholders for change.
- As an employer, the City will ensure people with disabilities have access to employment opportunities within the corporation and employment policies and practices that facilitate reasonable accommodation for qualified applicants and current employees.

C. DEFINITIONS

Accessibility describes the degree of ease that something (e.g., a device, service, place) can be used and enjoyed by persons with a disability. Accessibility requires conscious planning, design and/or effort to ensure barriers are removed, and the environment is highly useable and practical for the general population.

Accessible Design are measures that ensures both "direct access" (i.e., unassisted) and "indirect access" meaning compatibility with a person's assistive technology (for example, computer screen readers). Accessible design can be accomplished by mainstream or universal design, which allows a person with a disability to use the same facility or service as everyone else (preferred) or in a segregated manner with a separate solution for people with a disability.

Accommodation refers to the changes or modifications made to a system (e.g. a policy or practice) to meet the needs of a specific individual or group. Accommodations can be options to overcome any type of barriers within an existing system.

Barrier is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of the individuals' disability. Barriers may include physical, architectural and attitudinal barriers as well as information or communications barriers, technological barriers, or a policy, procedure or practice.

Disability is a physical, mental, intellectual, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a function limitation— whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society.

Equity means treating everyone fairly by acknowledging their unique situation and addressing systemic barriers. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal benefits and outcomes.

Inclusion is the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, gender identity or expression, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.

Mitigation is a measure introduced to reduce or remove the negative impact on accessibility and prevent discrimination based on a physical or mental condition. It may be an individual

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reasonable accommodation or a systemic measure such as a policy or a change in infrastructure, policy or program design.

D. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all City of Victoria employees within the parameters of the Local Government Act and other relevant legislation, as well as current collective agreements.

E. PROCEEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The following procedures and guidelines provide direction to staff in implementing this Policy:

- Annual service planning by all City departments will include the priorities and initiatives adopted in the Council approved Short Term Action Plan pending availability of financial resources.
- Capital planning will incorporate equity considerations as long-term investments to support accessibility and inclusion.
- Requests for accommodation will be addressed by staff either through reasonable mitigation measures and/or long-term systemic change measures in policy, design and investment.
- Input from Council appointed Advisory Committees, Task Forces and other bodies will be sought for new program and service planning and design.
- Through the annual financial planning process, staff will identify resources required to advance accessibility actions, including potential trade-offs address priorities for Council consideration.
- Progress on implementation of the Accessibility Framework will be included in regular accountability reports.
- A designated staff member(s) will coordinate annual reporting on progress and challenges in implementing Accessibility Framework.

REVISION HISTORY

October 2020 – Initial Policy Adoption