



City of Nelson Accessibility Plan

Introduction and Legislative Context

Accessibility and inclusion benefit everyone. Ensuring that Nelson is a community that welcomes and supports people of all abilities strengthens the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the city.

The City of Nelson's Accessibility Plan establishes a coordinated framework of actions to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that may affect individuals living in, working in, or engaging with the City. It reflects Council's commitment to fostering an inclusive municipality where civic facilities, services, programs, and employment practices are accessible to everyone.

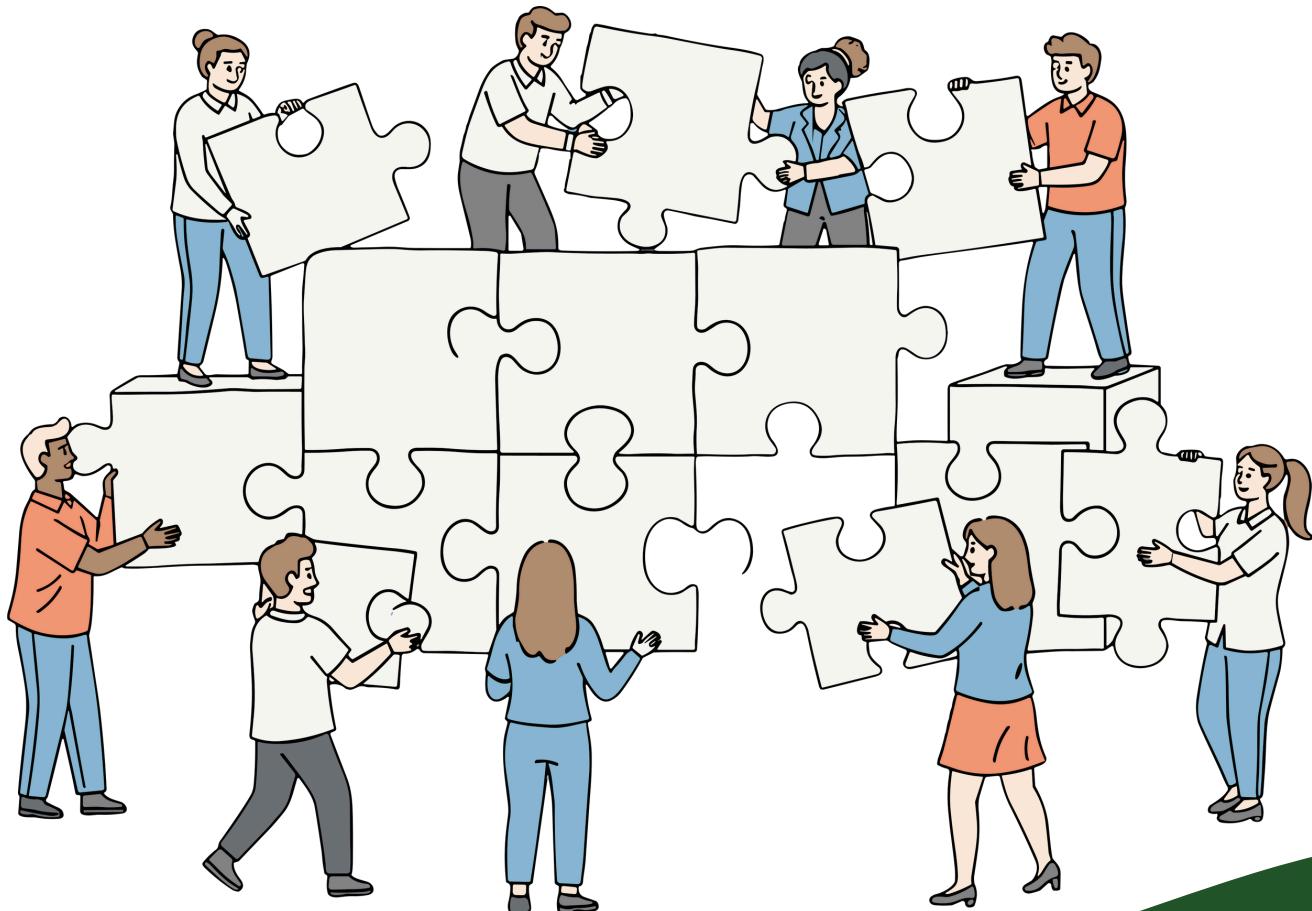
This Plan fulfills the City's obligations under the Accessible British Columbia Act and Accessible British Columbia Regulation, which require local governments to prepare and maintain an accessibility plan, establish an accessibility committee, and provide a public feedback mechanism. The Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every three years to ensure continued progress and alignment with emerging best practices.

The City's approach to accessibility is proactive: accessibility is not an add-on but a lens applied to all municipal activities. From planning and infrastructure to communication and community engagement. The actions outlined in this Plan promote awareness among staff and the broader community and guide decision-making that supports equitable access and participation.

Implementation will proceed as resources permit and as opportunities arise, evolving through community input and new information.

The Plan is guided by the following principles outlined in the Accessible British Columbia Act:

- **Inclusion:** Accessibility benefits everyone and should be embedded in all decisions.
- **Adaptability:** Solutions must accommodate the diverse and changing needs of individuals.
- **Diversity:** The City recognizes the broad spectrum of human ability, identity, and experience.
- **Collaboration:** Accessibility is a shared responsibility among government, staff, and the community.
- **Self-Determination:** Persons with disabilities must have a voice in decisions that affect them.
- **Universal Design:** Environments and systems should be usable by as many people as possible without adaptation.



Relationship to the Official Community Plan and Strategic Goals

The City of Nelson's Accessibility Plan is a key instrument for advancing the vision, guiding principles, and policy objectives outlined in the Official Community Plan (OCP) 2025. The OCP establishes a long-term vision for Nelson as a welcoming, heritage-rich mountain community that prioritizes equity, health, and climate resilience in all decision-making. These same principles form the foundation of this Accessibility Plan.

Advancing Equity and Inclusion

The OCP identifies equity as one of Nelson's three guiding principles and defines it as ensuring that no one is left behind. Accessibility directly supports this goal by addressing systemic barriers that limit participation in civic life, employment, services, and public spaces. By applying an equity lens to municipal operations, infrastructure, and community engagement, this Plan reinforces the City's commitment to fair and inclusive access for all residents, regardless of age, ability, or background. This aligns with OCP objectives such as fostering an inclusive, diverse, accessible, and vibrant community, and removing barriers for equity-deserving populations to participate fully in civic life.

Supporting Community Health and Well-Being

Accessibility is integral to public health, safety, and social inclusion, which are key aspects of the OCP's health principle. The Plan complements OCP policies that aim to enhance physical, social, and psychological well-being by ensuring that City facilities, public spaces, and services are designed for universal access. This includes collaboration with those with lived experiences and community partners to improve community wellness, remove environmental and social barriers, and promote active transportation and recreation that are accessible to everyone.

Strengthening Climate Resilience and Sustainable Growth

The OCP emphasizes the interconnectedness of equity, health, and climate resilience. Accessibility planning contributes to these goals by fostering compact, walkable neighbourhoods and promoting mobility choices that everyone can access and utilize. An accessible community is also a more climate-resilient one, where residents can safely reach essential services and public spaces even during disruptions or extreme weather events. This supports OCP climate objectives to design urban systems that are adaptive, equitable, and sustainable.

Alignment with Nelson's Strategic Goals

Beyond the OCP, this Accessibility Plan reinforces the City's strategic goals related to community livability, sustainable infrastructure, and inclusive governance. By embedding accessibility into policies, planning, and operations, Nelson strengthens its capacity to deliver equitable services, foster community connection, and maintain its small-town character while growing sustainably.

The Plan serves as a living document that helps the City's long-term vision by ensuring that every strategy, policy, and capital investment contributes to a community that is truly inclusive and accessible to all.



Accessibility Committee

Structure

Nelson is working to establish a two-tier Accessibility Committee model to ensure both internal coordination and meaningful community engagement.

Internal Committee (City Staff and Key Departments):

- Human Resources
- Communications
- Public Works
- Senior Planner
- EDI-trained staff representative
- Youth Centre



External Committee:

**Will be establish in 206*

- Indigenous representative
- Youth Centre representative
- Community member with lived experience of disability
- Care aide or support worker

An Accessibility Liaison supports both committees, coordinating meetings, tracking feedback, and ensuring that community input is documented and reported back to staff and Council.

The City of Nelson commits to eliminating accessibility barriers for all committee members and will work with each individual to ensure they can participate fully in all committee meetings and activities

Community Feedback and Engagement

The City of Nelson serves a population of approximately 11,000 residents within a compact, hillside community. Its geography presents unique challenges for mobility, including steep grades, limited parking, and a mix of heritage and modern infrastructure.

The Accessibility Committee conducted community outreach, including feedback from individuals with mobility and vision impairments, parents with strollers, seniors, and business owners.

Public input highlighted needs in three main areas:

- **Physical accessibility:** Barriers in older buildings, public washrooms, and sidewalks.
- **Information and communication:** Lack of tactile signage, online accessibility gaps, and limited awareness of available supports.
- **Systemic barriers:** A desire for more inclusive service delivery, language awareness, and accessibility transparency from the City

Community feedback will continue to shape future updates through an ongoing feedback mechanism and open consultation sessions.



Ongoing Feedback Mechanism

The City of Nelson is committed to maintaining a transparent, inclusive, and accessible feedback process that enables residents of all abilities to share input on accessibility barriers, initiatives, and opportunities for improvement. Multiple feedback channels are available to ensure that residents can participate in the way that best meets their needs.

Feedback may be submitted through the following accessible options:

- **Email**

Residents may submit feedback by email at **accessibility@nelson.ca**. Emails are monitored regularly and are treated with the same level of review and documentation as feedback received through other channels.

- **In Person**

Written or verbal feedback is accepted in person at City Hall and the Nelson Public Library. Staff are available to assist individuals who may require support to share their comments or concerns.

- **Staff-Assisted Feedback**

Residents who prefer not to provide written feedback themselves may request assistance from City staff to have their comments recorded on their behalf by calling **250-352-8136**. This service is intended to remove barriers related to literacy, disability, language, or technology access.

Follow-Up and Accountability

All feedback received is reviewed by City staff. Feedback is summarized and reported to the Accessibility Committee on a regular basis. Trends, recurring barriers, and emerging issues are analyzed to help inform City policies, projects, and priority actions related to accessibility.

Public Awareness and Promotion

To ensure residents are aware of available feedback options, the City will advertise the feedback process annually in the Nelson Star. This advertisement will clearly outline all available methods for submitting comments and requesting support.

Digital Engagement and Accessibility Hub

The City is developing a dedicated Social Pinpoint website focused on accessibility. This platform will serve as a centralized hub for information about accessibility initiatives, projects, and progress across the City. It will also provide an additional, interactive way for residents to submit feedback, share experiences, and engage with accessibility-related work in Nelson.



Barrier Assessment

The following summarizes identified barriers across City operations and community spaces:

Category	Identified Barriers	Examples
Built Environment	Inaccessible door hardware, washrooms, and paths; lack of tactile signage	Door knobs at City Hall; steep thresholds; no accessible washroom at Municipal Campground
Information & Communication	Limited accessible materials; lack of tactile and braille signage; digital accessibility gaps	No tactile restroom signage; web forms not screen-reader compatible
Attitudes & Awareness	Limited training and awareness of inclusive language and tone labeling	Staff and public interaction training needed
Policies & Practices	Accessibility not fully integrated into bylaw and business approval processes	No accessibility verification in business licensing
Technology	Lack of assistive technology and accessible document tools	Need for software enabling accessible document creation
Transportation & Recreation	Limited adaptive transportation and recreation options	Lack of accessible taxis and inclusive recreational programming

Goals and Actions

Short-Term (1–2 Years)

- Establish an external Accessibility Committee .
- Examine City of Nelson websites for accessibility barriers and updating all electronic/online resources.
- Provide citywide staff training on inclusive communication and policy development.
- Adopt bylaw amendments requiring accessibility verification for new businesses and street patios.
- Install lever door handles and tactile/braille signage in Cottonwood Falls Park.
- Implement accessibility improvements to Cottonwood Falls washrooms (touchless flush, accessible dispensers, change tables).

Medium-Term (3–5 Years)

- Replace door hardware and add tactile signage in all public facilities.
- Incorporate accessibility checkpoints in OCP and urban planning processes.
- Develop an online Accessible Facilities Map showing accessible parking, entrances, and washrooms.
- Expand inclusive recreation programming through partnerships with adaptive organizations (e.g., RAD Society).
- Conduct citywide accessibility audits of sidewalks, parks, and crosswalks, and maintain accessible elements in public spaces through monitoring and regularly planned maintenance.

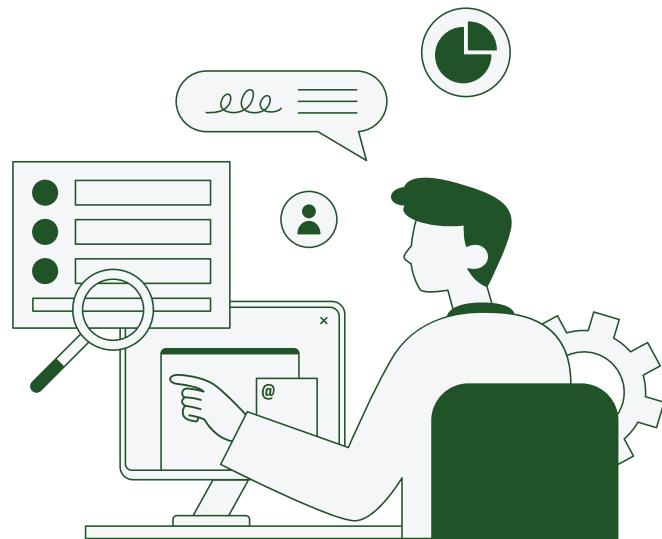
Long-Term (5+ Years)

- Ensure full accessibility of the Municipal Campground, including toilets, showers, laundry, and tent pads.
- Integrate universal design principles into all new City capital projects (e.g., Civic Centre, new Police Station).
- Maintain and refresh accessible parking paint and signage citywide.
- Continue to advocate to BC Transit for increased public transit hours and routes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress will be tracked through measurable indicators such as:

- Number of barriers removed or mitigated.
- Number of staff trained in inclusive practices.
- Accessibility compliance in new bylaws and projects.
- Public satisfaction and engagement metrics.
- Implementation status of Accessibility Committee recommendations.



The Accessibility Plan is an ongoing document, and will be formally reviewed at least every three years by the Accessibility Committee or sooner if required by provincial standards or legislation.