

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee Summaries**

### **1) Built Environment**

The City of New Westminster's Engineering department works with various departments, contractors, external agencies and other stakeholders and agencies as we improve, update and create infrastructure that improves sustainability and accessibility for our communities.

#### **Current Guiding Documents, Projects and Plans:**

##### **[Master Transportation Plan & Neighbourhood Plans](#)**

Overarching long-term plan for transportation in New Westminster. Prioritizes sustainable modes of transportation (walking/wheeling, cycling, transit) and calls for improved sidewalk accessibility and principles of Universal Design.

##### **[Active Transportation Network Plan](#)**

New city-wide plan for 26 active transportation routes across New Westminster that are designed for people of all ages and abilities. Focused on cycling but acknowledges that users of mobility aids may also use infrastructure.

##### **[Signalized Intersections Policy](#)**

Policy for the design and installation of traffic signals and crosswalks that are focused on pedestrian convenience, comfort, and accessibility. Strong emphasis on designing and providing features for people with disabilities.

##### **[Subdivision & Development Control Bylaw](#)**

Newly updated bylaw that outlines how new public infrastructure should be built by private developers.

##### **[Zoning Bylaw](#)**

Bylaw covering how private development is built, including provisions for accessible parking.

##### **[BC Building Code](#)**

Provincial standard outlining all details relating to access to and within buildings.

##### **[Wheelability Assessment Project](#)**

In March 2019 the City received a Built Environment and Active Transportation Grant of \$25,000 to implement the Wheelability Assessment Project to improve mobility and transportation options for people reliant on mobility aids.

## **Examples:**

Curb Letdowns – The City has installed at least one letdown at every intersection in New Westminster. Curb letdowns now follow City of Vancouver design standards, which include detectable direction lines.

Countdown Timers and Accessible Pushbuttons – Many traffic signals include countdowns. Newer pushbutton technology is being incorporated into new traffic signals.

Improved Pedestrian Crossings – The City upgrades several pedestrian crossings every year, partly based on input/requests from the public.

Agnes Greenway – Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs) installed at all intersections. Sawcut concrete used in new sidewalk/seating areas.

Accessible Parking – Accessible parking added at Moody Park pool. Moody Park Arena is a good example of current design approach.

Pattullo Bridge Project – City has strongly and successfully advocated for accessible grades for all pathways on the project.

Accessible Bus Stops – The City is working to address remaining inaccessible bus stops.

Riverside Park – New pathway enables improved access to the site for wheeled apparatus.

Sixth Street Play Area at Westminster Pier Park – Play equipment and rubberized surfaces were designed for accessibility. New bridge and ramp are fully accessible.

Victoria Hill Play Space and Moody Park – Wheelchair-accessible picnic tables installed.

## 2) Information and Communications

The City of New Westminster's Communications Team works in conjunction with different internal and external partners to ensure local government services are accessible through a variety of communication methods.

Currently the Communications Team is comprised of one manager and three full time staff that serve both the people of New Westminster and every department in the City of New Westminster. The Communications Team activities include disseminating timely and accurate information. They are also responsible for assisting with the advertising and promotion of City programs and events and for creating and supporting a consistent identity for communications.

The City's Communication Team works closely with the Public Engagement department to ensure that community members are equipped with the information they need to share their input, feedback and participate in civic engagement processes.

New Westminster is diverse in language, places of birth, age and education attainment levels, all good reasons for providing information in accessible formats. To ensure equitable access to information we use the following ways to communicate with the public:

- Citypage which is published in the New Westminster Record (both in print and online)
- Citypage which is emailed directly to subscribers
- City of New Westminster social media channels (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.)
- Digital signs throughout the city
- Posters in city-owned facilities
- City of New Westminster website/New Westminster Police Department website
- City Calendar of Events
- Press releases
- Reports and brochures
- Digital signage inside city-owned facilities
- Advertising in local news publications

We are working to improve accessibility by employing the following when possible:

- Captions in videos
- Using photos that address diversity and inclusiveness
- Alt Text that enables assistive technology to describe an image
- Plain language
- Websites designed and coded so people with disabilities can use them
- Simplifying layout and design

## Be Heard New West

Be Heard is the City's new online community engagement platform - a consistent, user-friendly online space where New West residents and stakeholders can learn about City projects, share their feedback and engage in dialogue with each other.

Community members can register on the site and receive updates when new projects are posted and projects are updated. The goal is to build an active online community and have residents and business operators coming to the site regularly to engage with the City. Explore the platform at [beheardnewwest.ca](http://beheardnewwest.ca).

### **3) Service Delivery**

The City of New Westminster's Parks and Recreation department has been working on providing increased accessibility in facilities and services, which has included updating accessibility policies, completing an accessibility audit, and compiling a list of recommendations.

#### **Current Services, Projects and Initiatives:**

##### Financial Assistance

New Westminster residents can receive a 50% discount on eligible programs and approved household members are granted \$1000 non-transferable credits that expire.

##### Access Tickets

Access Tickets involve bulk sales to pre-approved qualifying Social Service agencies offering mental health residential or transitional services in New Westminster. The agency will dispense the Access Tickets that provide a 50% discount on admission fees to their clients.

##### Drop-In Programs

Customers unable to independently participate in admission based programs may be accompanied by a support person and the support person is granted free admission.

##### Register Programs

Parks and Recreation staff work with partners to attempt to meet the needs of customers.

##### Try It Programs

Each season we offer new opportunities at our \$2.00 rate. The Try It offerings change seasonally and the reduced fee applies to everyone.

##### [New Westminster Age and Ability Friendly Community Strategy](#)

In August 2016 the City was approached by UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) to participate in a Studio Project, which assisted with the creation of the New Westminster Age-Friendly Community Strategy in April 2017.

##### [New Westminster Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan](#)

A Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan was developed February 2016 which included creating a framework through a project working group, survey and literature review.

### [Age Friendly City Initiative](#)

The Age-Friendly City Initiative includes the results of a consultation process that included 72 respondents who completed a Checklist of Essential Features of Age Friendly Cities developed by the World Health Organization as a part of its Global Age Friendly Cities Project.

### [Everybody Active](#)

The City received funding from the BC Recreation and Parks Association under the Everybody Initiative and a report with consultation findings was created in November 2009.

### [Accessibility Features](#)

Each of our public city spaces including recreation centres, parks and arenas are accessible. All Recreation Centres offer handicap parking, accessible doors and washrooms. Also park accessibility refers to corresponding trails, parking and washrooms that can accommodate wheelchairs.

### [New Westminster's Official Community Plan](#)

The Community Plan provides a vision, goals, and policies for the City of New Westminister to the year 2041, which includes specific actions, development permit guidelines, and land use designations. This Plan is implemented by the City in various ways, including through policy initiatives, public programs, civic projects, and bylaws.

### [The təməsewtx<sup>w</sup> Aquatic and Community Centre](#)

The təməsewtx<sup>w</sup> Aquatic and Community Centre is a multi-year project that is scheduled to open in 2024 and we are working with the Rick Hansen Foundation to ensure it meets their accessibility certification process.

#### 4) Employment

The Human Resources Department supports each work area with respect to recruitment and selection, learning and development, absence and disability management, leadership and professional growth as well as developing and maintaining and various processes, procedures and policies to ensure legal and professional compliance as well as inclusivity.

##### **Current Services, Projects and Initiatives:**

##### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism (DEIAR) Framework

Through an RFP process we formed a relationship with LevelUp Planning and Consulting to conduct city-wide research through various consultation strategies to develop and implement a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (DEIAR) Framework for the City, which included the Police and Library Boards.

The framework includes next steps, toolkits, resources as well as key areas to ensure there are opportunities to review current practices, obtain different perspectives and incorporate equitable options to enhance inclusivity and diversity: Leadership and Accountability; Building Capacity to Set the Framework in Motion; Policy and Practice; Staff Engagement and Communications; Human Resources Policies and Practice; Education and Training; and Monitoring and Evaluation.

The framework has been utilized to assist with enhancing the strategic plan which has been collaboratively developed with Mayor and Council. This process has also included developing and utilizing foundations and lenses to ensure the overall framework is an integral part of our decision making process.

##### Recruitment Strategies

Through the development of the DEIAR framework, the Human Resources department has been working in conjunction with Hiring Managers to review our recruitment strategies, which has included adopting the following:

- Updating the verbiage within our postings to include a diversity statement and land acknowledgement:
  - To support a workforce that reflects the diversity of our community; women, Indigenous Peoples, racialized individuals, persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (LGBTQ2S+), persons with disabilities, and others who may contribute to diversity of our workforce, are encouraged to express their interest.
  - New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halq'eméylem-speaking peoples. It is acknowledged by the City that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. We are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

- Other posting updates
  - Reviewing postings for inclusive languages, such as highlighting opportunities for experience in place of education, and ensuring tasks/duties are not portrayed as gender specific.
- Adopting alternate strategies to enhance the recruitment process
  - Pre-screening through telephone calls
  - Utilizing and offering virtual interviews
  - Streamlining the recruitment process with combined interviews and testing
  - Providing interview questions before the interview
- Providing feedback to internal applicants
  - Coaching opportunity in conjunction with the hiring manager to explore growth and development

#### New Talent Management System (Taleo)

We tested and implemented a new Talent Management System (Taleo) to assist with streamlining the application process. Through the new system candidates can explore job postings, set-up their profile, and establish alerts for future opportunities.

#### Establishing Community Relationships

Working with different post-secondary institutions to explore co-op learning opportunities, as well as research partnerships. With more in-person events we have started attending local job fairs as well as conducting outreach to form relationships with diverse organizations:

- Immigrant Services Society of BC
  - Non-profit that provides a variety of settlement and employment support services to those that are new to Canada.
- BC Francophone Immigration Program
  - A cooperative that offers settlement, integration and employment assistance services to French-speaking immigrants settling in British Columbia.
- WorkBC
  - Provincially funded program that connects job seekers and employers, and they offer a variety of training, education, employment services and resources including accessibility and assistive technology.
  - Career Paths – Job Fair for Skilled Immigrants