

District of Squamish **Accessibility Plan**

For an accessible Squamish

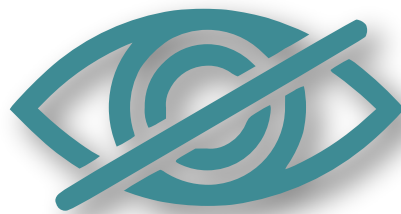




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Acknowledgments

The District recognizes that Squamish is in the core unceded territory of Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw. We offer gratitude to the Skwxwú7mesh People who have lived on these lands since time immemorial and reassert our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

The District is grateful for the work and insights of the Accessibility Committee. Members of the Committee have worked tirelessly to guide this plan. The District would also like to acknowledge that many Committee members hold unique perspectives as people with lived experiences of disability.

We are also grateful to the many community members and District staff who provided expertise. These conversations all helped create the Accessibility Plan.

This plan has been created through the lens of the District of Squamish IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility) Department which works to make the District of Squamish a place where all belong.



Executive summary

The District of Squamish is committed to increasing accessibility across all its spaces, services, and communications. Accessibility is a key component in many of the District's:

- strategies
- plans
- projects
- initiatives

Guided by the Accessible BC Act, the District of Squamish created an Accessibility Committee and developed an Accessibility Plan to identify and remove barriers to accessibility. In this process, the District:

- worked extensively with staff and members of the Accessibility Committee
- developed relationships with people with disabilities
- engaged with community members.

The resulting feedback informed this Accessibility Plan. District of Squamish staff and members of the Accessibility Committee worked together to create the Plan. We reviewed the Accessibility Plan in 2026 as required by the Accessible BC Act. This document includes those updates.



The plan is organized into six domains:

- 1 Built Environment and Public Spaces
- Transportation
- Communications and Information Design
- Governance and Corporate Culture
- Service Design and Delivery
- Employment

Each domain features goals and objectives to increase accessibility. Our vision of an accessible Squamish is one where everyone is included without experiencing barriers to access.

Feedback on this plan, and on accessibility at the District of Squamish more generally, is welcome.

Please email accessibility@squamish.ca or contact Municipal Hall at 604-892-5217.



Introduction

Why accessibility

Disability is more common than many people think. In fact, [27% of people over the age of 15 in Canada live with one or more disabilities](#). While present-day Canadians with disabilities face barriers and stigma, this has not always been the case. Disabled people have been members of society throughout human history. Before European contact, many indigenous societies had no need for a word for disability. Instead, community life considered the unique needs and contributions of all members. When colonists arrived, they built spaces assuming all citizens were able-bodied. This history has led to a situation where accessibility barriers exist throughout Canadian society. We need to identify and dismantle those barriers to allow disabled people to fully participate. Canada now has a strong legislative framework to protect people with disabilities from discrimination. This includes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act.



Accessibility B.C. Act

The Accessible British Columbia Act came into effect in 2022. The Act requires organizations like the District of Squamish, to:

- Create an Accessibility Committee to help identify barriers and give advice
- Develop an Accessibility Plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers. The plan must be updated every 3 years
- Receive comments from the public about the Plan and accessibility barriers

The deadline to comply with the Accessible B.C. Act was September 1, 2023.

Under the Act, an organization's Accessibility Plan must consider a set of principles. These are outlined below with a description of how they relate to the District of Squamish Accessibility Plan.



Inclusion

means making sure everyone belongs and can participate.

The District of Squamish Accessibility Committee includes people with lived experience of disability and chronic illness. Committee meetings and community engagement activities provide diverse opportunities, methods, and accommodations to include everyone.

Adaptability

means the ability to be adjusted or retrofitted as circumstances change.

Many of the strategic goals in this plan ensure multiple options or flexibility. For example, providing contact via email and phone, adapted programming and housing options, among others.

Diversity

means representing a wide variety of orientations, perspectives, or experiences

The Accessibility Committee includes members with a wide variety of disabilities and other social identities. The Accessibility Plan considers many disabilities and types of barriers across the District of Squamish.

Collaboration

means working together to achieve a common goal

The Accessibility Plan was developed in collaboration with the District of Squamish Accessibility Committee, staff, and community members through community engagement.



Self-determination

means each person can make their own decisions and manage their own lives

Disabled voices were included throughout the development of this plan. Many of the plan's objectives also focus on flexibility and choice for those impacted.

Universal design

means as much as possible, ensuring environments and products are designed in a way that all people can use them without having to adapt.

Where possible, this plan aligns with other District of Squamish plans and strategies. Accessibility is considered an important aspect of equity in general. Universal Design is referenced throughout the plan.



Nothing about us without us

During the negotiations to create the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the International Disability Caucus adopted the slogan “nothing about us without us”. The phrase has since become a rallying cry for many communities but is widely regarded as originating in disability movements.

“Nothing about us without us” highlights the importance of including disabled voices in any planning or policy decisions that might affect accessibility. It aligns with a social model of disability, which sees disability as a result of an ableist society. Alternatively, the medical model of disability focuses on the individual as abnormal.

Medical model of disability

This model sees disability in the person themselves, as a direct result of their impairment or difference. In this model, disabled people are seen as deficient or abnormal and in need of aid or a cure.

Social model of disability

This model sees disability as being caused by the way society is organized. For example, a lack of ramps or closed captioning is disabling, not the fact that someone uses a wheelchair or is Deaf.



Language of disability

The language around disability is constantly changing. People have different preferences for terminology that reflects their identities.

Person-first language

Person-first language highlights the person before the disability. For example, someone might say “person with a disability”. This is used by many governments and organizations as a general practice.

Identity-first language

Many disabled people prefer identity-first language. In this way, someone might say “disabled person”. Identity-first terms recognize how disability forms a meaningful part of someone’s social identity.

Other terms

The term disabled has often been replaced with euphemisms like “differently abled”, “special needs”, or “handi-capable”. Many [disability activists actively resist these phrases](#) and embrace the word “disability” as a term that accurately reflects their experiences in an ableist society. Many disabilities are also being recognized as distinct cultural groups, such as Deafhood, Autism, and neurodivergence.

Language in this plan

The District of Squamish Accessibility Committee prioritized disabled voices when creating this plan to honour “nothing about us without us”. Throughout the process, we met disabled people in the community. We provided accommodations and developed relationships. We want to recognize the diversity of disabled perspectives and “nothing about us without us”. Therefore, this Accessibility Plan uses both person-first language and identity-first language. This supports the principle of self-determination by intentionally including and acknowledging both preferences. Where appropriate, this plan also recognizes disabled communities as cultures by capitalizing words, such as “Deaf”.

This plan is available in accessible formats.



An accessible Squamish

During the community engagement, participants were asked to consider the following questions:

- What do you think of when you hear the word accessibility?
- What does an accessible Squamish mean to you?

The responses to these questions were analyzed separately using Quirkos qualitative software. The results generated the word cloud included on the next page.

Respondents highlighted that every person should be able to access what they need without experiencing barriers. In addition, disabled people should feel included and not othered (as one respondent put it, “inclusion is belonging that goes beyond acceptance”). Some respondents expanded the idea of accessibility to include protection of land and cultural activities and others focused on the idea of welcoming all people.

As a result of this process, the District of Squamish Accessibility Plan includes the following vision:

The District of Squamish provides spaces, services, and communications that allow everyone to be included without experiencing barriers to access.

The vision for an accessible Squamish is included in the Accessibility Plan as a guide for its implementation, to ensure all people are welcomed and feel a sense of belonging.



word cloud including the following words, biggest to smallest: people, able, barriers, access, feel, everyone, included, needs, clean, job, without, complete, other, others, workplace



A word cloud including the following words, biggest to smallest: people, able, barriers, access, feel, everyone, included, needs, clean, job, without, complete, other, others, workplace

Community context

Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh Territory

The District of Squamish is situated in the unceded, traditional territory of the Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh People at the end of Átl'ka7tsem/ Howe Sound. Within the District of Squamish boundaries there are eight Squamish Nation Reserves. Many of these are permanent or seasonal village sites. Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh culture, customs, traditions, and laws are passed on through generations. They are deeply connected to the lands, waters, and beings of this territory.

Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw has existed as a political entity since its amalgamation in 1923, although the history of Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh People and land go back millennia. An elected Council governs the Nation. Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh sníchim (Squamish language) is endangered and is being revitalized.

Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw and the District of Squamish continue to deepen their relationship founded in respect and recognition of Indigenous rights, culture, and heritage. In 2025, Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw and the District of Squamish signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU). The MOU affirms their government-to-government relationship and sets out a shared path for land stewardship, reconciliation, and collaborative decision-making.

Community profile

Squamish is a growing and diverse community. From 2016 to 2021, the population grew 22% to 23,819. Like many other communities, the cost of living has increased dramatically. Many residents commute to work in neighbouring communities like Vancouver and Whistler. English and French are the most spoken languages followed by Punjabi, German, Spanish, and Tagalog/Filipino. Residents value the natural environment and Squamish is known as the “adventure capital of Canada”. The community has many outdoor amenities such as trails and parks. Squamish is a prime tourist destination for mountain bikers, rock climbers, and other outdoor sports enthusiasts. Squamish also has a vibrant arts and culture community and a growing culinary scene.



Commitment to accessibility

The District of Squamish views accessibility as a vital part of equity and inclusion work. Accessibility is now part of many of our plans and strategies which help guide us. In this way, we commit to making Squamish a more accessible place to live, work, and play now and into the future.

Accessibility in District plans and strategies

The **Squamish 2040 – Official Community Plan (OCP)** includes accessible built environments, housing and support for active living and universal mobility. Many of the strategies outlined in the OCP mention accessibility as a principle and objective. The OCP has been updated according to the objectives of this Accessibility Plan.

The **District of Squamish Strategic Plan 2023-2026** includes accessibility as a governing principle and as pillars of the plan. The Strategic Plan also requires staff to implement the Accessible BC Act requirements.

The **District of Squamish Inclusion Strategy: IDEAs in Action** improves inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility at the District. The Strategy was developed by the IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access) Committee which recognizes accessibility as a core element in their work.

The **District of Squamish Community Climate Action Plan** includes IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access) as a core component. Accessibility is considered throughout the plan.

The **District of Squamish Transportation Master Plan** also incorporates accessibility throughout.

The **District of Squamish Age-Friendly Community Plan** supports and references the Accessibility Plan objectives as it relates to older adults in the community.

District staff incorporate accessibility as they review and develop plans and strategies.

Many of the actions have a distinct completion, such as an audit. Other actions might require continuous support and resources, such as training. Both types of actions are considered "implemented".



What have we done so far?

The District of Squamish Accessibility Plan was adopted by Council on June 27, 2023. Since then, the Accessibility Committee has guided how the District of Squamish implements the plan. Here are some of the things we have done over the past three years:

- Completed accessibility audits of:
 - Brennan Park Recreation Centre
 - Municipal Hall
 - Squamish Public Library
 - The 55 Activity Centre
 - Firehall #1
 - Squamish Adventure Centre
 - Spak'wus Feather Park
 - Junction Park
 - Stan Clarke Park
 - Rose Park
 - Smoke Bluffs Park
- Held community events, including:
 - Crip Camp film screening at the Squamish Public Library
 - Walk n' Roll Celebration
- Installed assistive listening devices in:
 - Brennan Park Recreation Centre
 - Municipal Hall Council Chambers
 - Squamish Public Library
 - The 55 Activity Centre
 - Emergency Operations Centre
 - Squamish Landfill Weigh Scale
- Offered staff training in:
 - General accessibility and the Accessible BC Act
 - Supporting people with visual impairments
 - Deaf culture
 - Accessible service delivery
 - Plain language
- Upgraded District of Squamish and Squamish Public Library websites to be more accessible
- Developed policies, guidelines, plans, and updated Bylaws to ensure accessibility is part of all we do

Systemic change

The Accessibility Committee focuses on systemic change across the organization. This means we embed an accessibility lens into our systems and processes so that we consider accessibility in all the decisions that Council and staff make. [Systemic change takes time](#) but is robust and leads to further changes throughout organizations as a whole. More information about what we have completed is available throughout the Goals and Objectives of this Accessibility Plan.



Goals and objectives

The following Goals and Objectives are organized according to various domains which consider the breadth of the services, facilities, and communications provided by the District of Squamish. Each domain includes a summary of the community engagement feedback followed by overarching goals and objectives. The domains include:

- Built Environment and Public Spaces
- Transportation
- Communications and Information Design
- Governance and Corporate Culture
- Service Design and Delivery
- Employment

The goals outlined in this plan are guided by the vision of an accessible Squamish:

The District of Squamish provides spaces, services, and communications that allow everyone to be included without experiencing barriers to access.



Built environment and public spaces

Goal 1:

Built environment and public spaces

There is an increased availability of park and public space amenities that are accessible or support accessibility needs.

Objectives:

1. Develop a prioritization process for accessibility upgrades.
2. Create accessibility standards for new municipal park development to ensure any new park and public space amenities are accessible or include accessibility features. This should consider the spectrum of disabilities and differences:
 - sensory
 - physical
 - neurodivergence
 - mental health and others
3. Create awareness of accessibility features that are currently available at parks through public advertising and signage.
4. Update the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master plan using an accessibility scope and lens.
5. Retrofit existing park and public space amenities to be more accessible. This might include accessible benches, shelters, water fountains, bathrooms, alternative modes of communication on signage such as ASL illustrations, pictographs, or braille, and others.

Implemented actions:

- Conduct a review of municipal parks to assess accessibility, including amenities, wayfinding, and surrounding areas such as parking.

Goal 2:

Built environment and public spaces

Increased accessibility at existing District and Library facilities.

Objectives:

1. Integrate larger accessibility retrofits and infrastructure updates into long term capital planning.
2. Update the Real Estate and Facilities Masterplan with an accessibility lens.

Implemented actions:

- Conduct an accessibility audit of all facilities through a third-party consultant including identification of immediate and long-term infrastructure updates and resources required. This includes all washrooms, changerooms, and recreation amenities, such as pools and arenas.
- Include short-term retrofits and infrastructure updates into budget cycle.

Goal 3:

Built environment and public spaces

New District facilities will be designed and built according to universal design principles.

Objectives

1. Ensure new facilities go beyond the BC Building Code and consider accessibility as a core design principle. To achieve this, create standardized language to include accessibility considerations in District specifications and procurement evaluation criteria where applicable.
2. Develop a policy outlining inclusive requirements for all District facilities.
3. Update the Real Estate and Facilities Masterplan with an accessibility lens.

Implemented actions:

- Review Procurement Policy for accessibility gaps and update as required.

4. Goal 4:

Built environment and public spaces

District streetscapes are accessible, including adequate accessible parking.

Objectives:

1. Launch a public awareness campaign about the District's Sidewalk and Maintenance policy, highlighting how the public can contribute to the maintenance of sidewalk amenities. For example, this might include reporting degraded sidewalk areas.
2. Develop a framework for engagement with seniors and people with disabilities to identify accessibility barriers such as problem areas in existing and proposed streetscapes and parking and other concerns.
3. Develop a prioritization process for accessibility upgrades of existing streetscapes with new budget and staff support.
4. Review and update for the following for accessibility considerations. Include people with lived experience of disability in these reviews.
 - a. Subdivision Development Control Bylaw (2649)
 - b. Building Bylaw (1822)
 - c. Traffic Bylaw (2220)

Implemented actions:

- Create an accessibility component to streetscape guidelines which will be referenced in the Subdivision Development Control Bylaw (2649) for any new development projects.
- Review number, location, and design of accessible on street parking and prioritize new locations and upgrades.

Goal 5:

Built environment and public spaces

New housing and commercial developments include universal design.

Objectives

1. Consider policy that supports more accessible, affordable units.
2. Support the Squamish Community Housing Society and other community housing organizations in the design and build out of universally accessible housing within the community.

Implemented actions:

- Review and revise adaptable/accessible unit policy in the OCP (2500) in both policy and development permit guidelines to integrate accessibility review in rezonings and development permit applications.
- Review and revise accessible regulations in the Zoning Bylaw (2200), including off-street parking, to meet or exceed best practices.





Transportation

Goal 1:

Transportation

Pedestrian transportation networks are accessible, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and trails.

Objectives:

1. Create a public accessibility layer on the District GIS webmap with opportunities for feedback.
 - a. Include accessibility information in new and existing signage.
2. Review trails planning with an accessibility lens. This could include developing an accessibility rating standard for trails or exploring accessible wayfinding technology.
3. Work with other levels of government to examine crossing times at Highway 99 intersections.
4. Increase enforcement of parking infringements that create accessibility barriers, such as overhang onto sidewalks.
5. Collaborate with governments and local organizations to improve the accessibility of trails.
6. Install resting areas on existing trails and build rest stops into future trail planning.

Implemented actions:

- Ensure new sidewalks prioritize accessibility and that the sidewalk network is continuous and accessible.
- Adopt a standard for accessible crosswalks with audible and tactile indicators as well as adequately placed push buttons.

Goal 2:

Transportation

Bike networks are accessible.

Objectives:

1. Improve visibility and signage for multiple users of shared paths, including mobility scooters, wheelchairs, adaptive bikes, and others.

Implemented actions:

- Develop a wide range of cycle routes and advertise alternate routes so travelers have a variety of options, including paved, flat, quiet, and others.



Goal 3:

Transportation

Transit networks and infrastructure are accessible

Objectives:

1. Increase transit service to Brennan Park.
2. Advocate for wheelchair-accessible regional transit.
3. Continue to develop accessible transit stops. This includes:
 - larger and better lit shelters with space for wheelchairs and strollers
 - accessible signage including Braille, raised letters, and colour contrast

Implemented actions:

- Support implementation of any recommendations related to accessibility outlined in the Transportation Masterplan.
- Work with Squamish Nation to assess priorities for increased transit service to reserve lands.
- Prioritize accessible transit stops close to seniors' areas as well as supportive housing for vulnerable populations.
- Increase HandyDART service and ticket purchasing options.
- Continue advocating for regional transit.



Communications and information design

Goal 1:

Communications and information design

All District of Squamish communications (including the Library) meet WCAG 2.1 standards, including websites, documents, and social media posts.

Objectives:

1. Provide alternative formats by request such as large print or electronic.
2. Investigate how to provide information in Braille.

Implemented actions:

- Conduct an accessibility audit of all District and Library websites, including code and content updates, staff training, and ongoing review, maintenance, and reporting to ensure website design is compliant with WCAG 2.1 standards.
- Ensure information is presented in a variety of formats including audible and in print and that all videos include subtitles where possible or captioning.
- Advocate that third party providers make their platforms and software accessible.

Goal 2:

Communications and information design

People with disabilities are visible in Squamish and information is updated, clear, and accurate.

Objectives:

1. Ensure information on accessibility is available, accurate, and inclusive of all disabilities. This includes information about accessible parking and curb cuts, wayfinding, website compliance, accessible programming, captioning, and other things.
2. Ensure there are multiple options for contact and that this is clear and consistent across departments. This includes webforms, email, phone, in person, video chat, and others.
3. Advertise accessible programming in more formats beyond social media and newsletters.
4. Create an internal accessibility layer on the District GIS Webmap to document a baseline of accessibility attributes through existing infrastructure inspection programs. Create a plan for improving accessibility infrastructure that can inform future projects.
5. Continue to explore opportunities for open data and provide public information related to accessibility using the Open Data Guiding Principles.
6. Ensure Accessibility Plan progress is transparent and up to date.
7. Provide plain language resources and integrate into work processes.

Implemented actions:

- Support events that destigmatize disability and celebrate accessibility.
- Update marketing and promotion to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. Examples include representation of disabled people in stock images on District websites and documents and other places.

Goal 3:

Communications and information design

Public engagement methods and materials are accessible and inclusive.

Objectives:

1. Ensure the District and Library offer a variety of formats for getting feedback such as webforms, email, phone, in person, and in other formats and languages other than English.
2. Ensure engagement platforms are accessible.
3. Review and update the accessibility feedback mechanism to follow best practices for accessibility.





Governance and corporate culture

Goal 1:

Governance and corporate culture

Accessibility is a requirement of the District's policies, bylaws, and decision-making.

Objectives:

1. Include an accessibility lens on Reports to Council.
2. In concert with the District of Squamish Inclusion Strategy, conduct an accessibility audit of all bylaws and policies as they come up for review and include enforcement resources.
3. Research the possibility of providing compensation to all equity-seeking groups, including people with disabilities, for serving on District committees and advisory boards.
4. Review the new accessibility standards published by Accessibility Standards Canada, specifically the Accessible Design for the Built Environment, and review how other municipalities are codifying these standards into their own policies and bylaws.
5. Support accessibility professional training for relevant staff.

Goal 2:

Governance and corporate culture

The District is a leader in collaborating and advocating for accessibility support.

Objectives:

1. Ensure prioritized recommendations are considered for inclusion in the 5 year Financial Plan, including provisions for grant fund matching requirements.
 2. Ensure continued staff capacity to lead and manage the implementation of the Accessibility Plan.
 3. Meet with relevant ministries at Union of BC Municipalities to advocate for accessibility implementation support for local governments.
 4. Research and develop a lived experience consultant model to regularly inform District projects.
- opportunities for collaboration with community organizations
 - priorities and responsibilities over a 10 year timeline
 - Fund a staff position to lead and manage the implementation of the Accessibility Plan.
 - Advocate to the Provincial and Federal governments for support and funding for accessibility initiatives, including those identified in this plan.
 - Participate in or develop networks with other local governments to collaborate on accessibility. This would include participation in the Municipal Accessibility Network, Sea to Sky, and others.
 - Advocate to the Provincial Government to upgrade standards and regulations for accessibility and ensure the District participates in these processes where possible. Examples include Provincial Building Code updates and others.
 - - Meet with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction at the Union of BC Municipalities 2023 to advocate for accessibility implementation support for local governments.

Implemented actions:

- Develop an action strategy for implementation of this Accessibility Plan which articulates:
 - actions that can be completed internally with existing budget allowances
 - actions that require external funding

Goal 3:

Governance and corporate culture

Accessibility is a consideration in emergency management.

Objectives:

1. Review the Sea to Sky Multimodal Evacuation Plan and the core Emergency Management Plan with an accessibility lens. Include people with disabilities in this review.

Implemented actions:

- Increase awareness of and embed accessibility into emergency response, considering issues like vulnerability during heat and smoke events, accessible reception centres and others.
- Continue to partner on emergency response with Squamish Nation..



Service design and delivery

Goal 1:

Service design and delivery

District and Library staff exhibit accessibility awareness and competency.

Implemented actions:

- Provide awareness raising and communication training for all staff from disabled tutors/organizations or representatives from cultural groups such as deafness and sign language, neurodivergence, and others.
- Support staff who pursue accessibility training as part of their professional development.

Goal 2:

Service design and delivery

District and Library programming, activities and events are accessible and inclusive, especially for children and youth.

Objectives:

1. Support a wider variety of accessible and adaptive sports such as adaptive skating, adaptive biking and others.
2. Increase the variety of accessible programs for children and offer adequate after school and summer program spaces for children with disabilities.
3. Include accessible equipment in existing programming such as Little Sneakers and others.
4. Implement a service level change to advance and support the increased delivery of accessible program design and services.
5. Provide accessibility training for community members, including sign language and disability awareness. Prioritize community partners.
6. Review the Recreation Access Pass with an accessibility lens.
7. Develop a separate Accessibility Plan for Recreation Services.

Implemented actions:

- Continue to partner with outside organizations and neurodivergent people to increase offerings of programs that are innovative and culturally safe. This might include adaptive swim lessons, maker space, parallel play, science/technology/engineering/math classes, relationship building and others.
- Encourage all permitted events to have an accessibility plan during the event planning process.
- Increase sensory friendly events for people who have sensitivities to noise, light, smells, and others.

Employment

Goal 1:

Employment

The District is an accessible and inclusive workplace.

Objectives:

1. Establish a written and transparent accommodation process that outlines:
 - a. how employees can request accommodations
 - b. how decisions and approvals are made within a social model of disability
2. Support the accommodation process across the organization by:
 - a. Providing virtual and in-person training with supervisors and managers.
 - b. Providing information about accommodation requests and the decision process during recruitment and for current employees.
 - c. Establishing a resources area such as a physical info board and online space
 - d. Providing regular updates for supervisors, managers and employees about workplace accessibility and the accommodation process.
3. Work with unions to promote and champion accessibility improvements.

Implemented actions:

- Support universal design principles for employee workspaces in new building or current building renovations by
- Ensuring accessibility features are available by default as much as possible including live captioning, accessible documents and others.
- Ensuring staff workplaces and workstations are accessible by default including:
 - automated doors
 - washrooms
 - elevators
 - adjustable workstations
 - lighting adjustments and other features.
- Provide accessibility awareness training to all staff including psychological safety training for leadership.



Feedback tools

Engagement summary

District staff used a broad and targeted engagement strategy to gather feedback on accessibility guided by the Accessibility Committee. The committee identified intended participants and provided feedback on how to make the engagement opportunities as accessible as possible.

During April-May 2023, the following engagements were conducted:

Let's Talk Squamish:

online public survey and mapping tool, as well as Frequently Asked Questions and staff contact information.

In-person feedback:

printed maps at four District facilities and Squamish Farmers Market where participants could identify barriers as well as comment boxes with an accessibility question available in English, Punjabi, Spanish, German, and Tagalog/Filipino.

Public focus groups:

offered in person and online at wheelchair-accessible District facilities, a senior housing complex, and a youth centre.

Staff survey:

launched internally online in alignment with the Let's Talk Squamish page.

Staff in-person feedback:

comment boxes in five District staff facilities.

Staff information sessions:

provided online as well as in-person at various team meetings.

Squamish Nation feedback:

in-person lunch with Squamish Nation Elders.

Council feedback:

online survey and one on one meetings with Mayor and Council as requested.

Interviews:

with members of the public and staff as necessary.

Rollabout:

Committee members and relevant staff attended in-person tours of District facilities and public spaces to gather information about barriers.

Scrollabout:

Committee members and relevant staff attended online tours of District websites to gather information about barriers.



Over 750 comments were collected from community and committee members, District staff, and Council. Staff then coded the comments according to the domains outlined in this plan. Once coded, staff identified consistent themes, barriers, and proposed solutions. Barriers and solutions were then reviewed with relevant District staff in an iterative process to develop overarching goals and objectives grounded in staff expertise. Finally, the draft strategy and actions, as well as the plan outline, were reviewed and validated with the Accessibility Committee to ensure disabled voices were included. Feedback was incorporated into the final version of this plan.

In order to retain specific and detailed feedback, staff also coded the comments according to each relevant District of Squamish department. This information was then sent to staff to incorporate into workplans.

In the fall of 2023, engagement gaps related to mental illness were identified. To address this, staff worked with community members to collect more feedback in early 2024. The Accessibility Plan was updated in consultation with Committee and community members. Staff will continue to engage with community members whose voices haven't been heard. Examples include culturally marginalized communities, unhoused community members, and those living with mental illness, among others.

As required by the Accessible BC Act, the Accessibility Plan was reviewed in 2026. The Accessibility Committee developed a small engagement event at the Library to show what had been completed and gather feedback. Staff reached out to accessibility organizations and disabled community members. Feedback was shared with the Accessibility Committee and all feedback was incorporated into the updated plan.

Committee activities

The District of Squamish Accessibility Committee was formed in January 2023 and met periodically from January-June to guide the development of the Plan. The committee is made up of both community members and staff, many of whom live with one or more disabilities. The Accessibility Committee provided input for a Terms of Reference, draft plan framework, engagement strategy, and the final District of Squamish Accessibility Plan. Staff also worked with disabled committee members to develop and continuously update accessible meeting practices which include the use of captioning, accessible washroom facilities, virtual meeting options, and early sharing of meeting documents. The final preparation of this plan was completed by District staff, some of whom identify as living with disabilities.

Since the adoption of this plan, the Accessibility Committee continues to meet regularly and provide guidance and feedback on its implementation.

Ways to stay engaged

As required by the Accessible BC Act, the District of Squamish invites feedback on this Accessibility Plan and accessibility within the District of Squamish more generally.

If you have feedback on the District of Squamish Accessibility Plan, or about accessibility in Squamish more generally, please email:

accessibility@squamish.ca

You can also phone Municipal Hall at 604-892-5217 or send a letter to:

Equity and Inclusion Advisor
District of Squamish
37955 Second Avenue, Squamish, B.C. V8B 0A3

In the future, the District of Squamish plans to add an online feedback form to the website. As implementation of this plan continues, more avenues for feedback will be developed.

Definitions

The Accessibility Committee recognizes that terminology related to accessibility and disability is varied and evolving. Where possible, we use definitions provided by the BC Government while acknowledging that the meaning of these words may be different for some people.

Ableism: bias, discrimination, or prejudice against disabled people which considers them less valuable than able-bodied people.

Accessibility: when all people can take part in their communities through work, play, and [other daily activities](#).

ASL: American Sign Language, one of the languages of the Deaf community in Canada and the United States.

In order to be more inclusive of people who may use ASL to communicate, we are including a resource developed by a local Deaf educator as a reference during emergencies. This resource is being integrated into District first response planning and we are grateful to Christina Cox of ASL Snapshots for its use.

Barrier: anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies, and affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.

Disability: an inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment or difference and a barrier.

Hidden or invisible disability: a disability that is not apparent or visible. Examples include chronic and mental illness. Examples include chronic and mental illness.

Identity first language: Identity First Language: wording that places the disability at the beginning of the phrase or in the form of an adjective. An example is “Deaf person”.

Impairment: a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive diminishment or loss of function, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.

Neurodivergence: a mind that functions in ways that are significantly different from what dominant society deems “normal”. See the work of [Nick Walker](#) for more.

Person first language: Person First Language: wording that places the person before the disability. And example is “person with a disability”.

Sensory disability: impairments that affect the senses, such as sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste.

Universal design: designing products and environments to be used by as many people as possible without the need for adaptation. Includes [7 principles](#) :

1. **Equitable use:** useful for people with diverse abilities
2. **Flexibility in use:** accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
3. **Simple and intuitive use:** easy to understand, regardless of experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level
4. **Perceptible information:** communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user’s sensory abilities
5. **Tolerance for error:** minimizes hazards and adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions
6. **Low physical effort:** can be use efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.



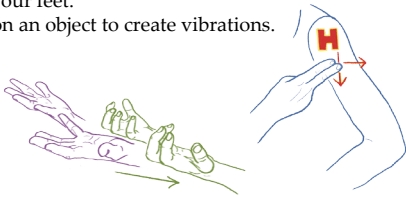
EMERGENCY

ASL



Visual and tactile ways to get someone's attention

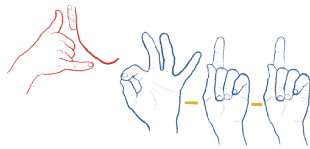
- Tap their shoulder.
- Wave your hands.
- Stomp your feet.
- Pound on an object to create vibrations.



YES

NO

WANT HOSPITAL?

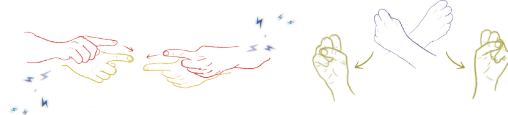


CALL 911



NEED HELP

Turn it into a Yes/No question by raising your eyebrows.



HURT?

SAFE?



CAN BREATHE?

When asking a question, "you" is implied by looking at the person.



HURT WHERE?

Furrow your eyebrows downwards with WH-question at the end.



DANGER



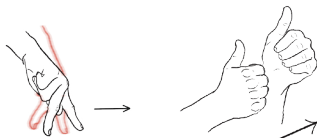
WATCH-OUT



FIRE



EVACUATE



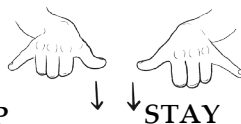
WALK



FOLLOW



STOP



STAY



SIT



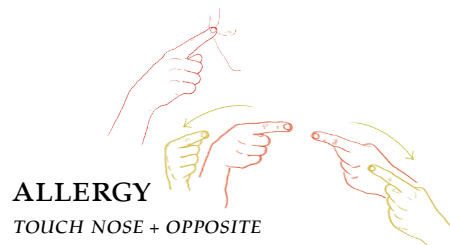
REST



MEDICAL
KIT



BLEED



ALLERGY

TOUCH NOSE + OPPOSITE

