



Staff Report to Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee

DATE: Wednesday, April 24, 2024

DEPARTMENT: Legislative Services

SUBJECT: Engagement Summary: Survey 2 – Accessibility & You

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report outlines the results of the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee survey that was released on Friday, March 1, 2024, and closed with an extended deadline of Sunday, April 7, 2024. The intent of this report is to provide an overview of the information collected from the public and analyze the data in order to determine the next steps forward for the Committee.

This engagement summary will also be useful for future consultants.

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting held November 22, 2023, the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee determined the City of Langford would use its “Let’s Chat Langford” engagement software platform to host surveys for the Committee. This platform can be utilized by anyone, regardless of where they live.

Through discussions with the Province, the Committee received a recommendation to start an Accessibility Plan focused on two aspects that are required by the *Accessible BC Act*: employment and service delivery. After the success of Survey #1 pertaining to accessibility engagement, the Committee published this survey titled “Accessibility & You.”

Initially, the survey was set to close April 1, 2024, but this deadline was extended by a week to provide more time for responders. The survey closed at 11:59 pm on Sunday, April 7, 2024.

This survey was promoted online through social media channels for all participating local governments. “Accessibility & You” was available online through Let’s Chat Langford, on paper, as a Word document, and as PDF that could be emailed.

COMMENTARY:

Surveys Completed and Project Page Visits:

Total Respondents (people who took the survey):	185
Visitors to the Survey:	372
Visits to Project Page:	767

Question 1: Do you (or the person you are assisting) identify as having a disability or disabilities, or have you or they experienced an accessibility challenge at any time? (*The Accessible British Columbia Act defines “disability” as meaning an inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier.*)

This question was multiple choice, and the following answers were collected:

Yes	90
No	59
No, but I have a connection with someone with a disability	30
Prefer not to answer	5

Question 2: Which type or types of disabilities impact you (or the person you are assisting)?

Physical/mobility	91
Learning	9
Developmental	7
Memory	11
Hearing/auditory	25
Mental health related	29
Seeing/visual	11
Pain-related	38
I do not have a disability and I am not assisting someone with a disability	47
Prefer not to answer	6

This question allowed respondents to select multiple options.

While this question also had a field titled “other”, the responses collected above are adequate. Information collected in this fillable field included personal and possibly identifiable information about the respondent(s) such as explicit details of a medical condition.

Question 3: Please identify your age range (or that of the person you are assisting)

Under 18	7
18-24	2
25-34	12
35-44	21
45-54	24
55-64	30
65-74	51
75+	29
Prefer not to answer	3

Question 4: In which of the partner municipalities do you (or the person you are assisting) live?

Colwood	22
Esquimalt	14
Highlands	10
Langford	77
Metchosin	28
Sooke	6
View Royal	12
I do not live in one of the partner municipalities, but I often visit these areas.	11
I do not live in one of the partner municipalities and I am rarely in these areas.	0

Question 5: What barriers, if any, do you (or the person you are assisting) experience when accessing municipal information? (Consider your municipality’s website, public engagement tools (such as this survey), news releases, Council meeting recordings, or other documents produced by the municipality. Examples of barriers might be lack of alt text, confusing or offensive language, lack of captioning, etc.)

This question allowed respondents to type/write their own answers. The following feedback was collected:

Feedback specific to each municipality:

Colwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer written and print materials over online only. • Wish to engage in person rather than only online.
---------	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty hearing at Council meetings or on the recorded video. • Wish to see local newspapers used more as an outlet for municipal information. • Wish to receive an email newsletter with updates from municipality. • Links are out of date on website. • Wish for more contact information for City staff.
Esquimalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website is difficult to use. • “Link in bio” is not user friendly or accessible. • No captioning or unsure how to access captioning on Council Meetings. • Too much information only shared on Facebook and not offline.
Highlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website is difficult to use.
Langford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website is difficult to use. • Website is not accessible. • Event calendars are not up to date. • No captioning or unsure how to access captioning on Council Meetings. • Search function on website is not helpful. • Difficulty finding information pertaining to finances. • Difficulty finding information pertaining to development. • Committee and Council resolutions are difficult to find on website. • Difficult to get in touch with City staff. • Difficult to get replies from City staff and Council. • Difficulty accessing Council meetings through doors after 7pm. • Inconsistent sound in Council Chambers • Contact phone number send callers through too many steps or loops them back through.
Metchosin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website is too basic. • Information is difficult to find on website. • Search function on website is not helpful. • Difficulty hearing at Council meetings. • Timeliness of information on website to be improved.
View Royal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website navigation is difficult. • Inconsistent sound in Council Chambers during meetings and on recordings
Sooke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website is difficult to use.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website homepage is too cluttered. • Website is not up to date. • Takes too much time to find what you are looking for on website.
--	--

General Feedback:

- Respondents who have colour blindness have a particularly difficult time accessing our municipal websites.
- Website information can be convoluted or insufficient.
- Not everyone uses websites or the internet.
- Confusing to access municipal information.

Question 6: Please indicate if you (or the person you are assisting) experience any barriers.

Accessing municipal parks, trails, playgrounds?	61
Accessing municipal programs or services?	18
Engaging with Council?	27
Accessing municipal buildings and grounds?	24
Interacting with bylaws or policies?	15
Interacting with municipal staff?	20
Participating in municipal events?	30
Interacting with signage/wayfinding around the municipality?	15
Accessing municipal sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes?	69

This question also allowed respondents to type/write their own answers through a field titled “other.” The following feedback was collected:

- Difficulty accessing municipal buildings during renovations and building alterations. Wished for municipalities to make sure ramps and accesses are available for those who need them at all times.
- Snow and inclement weather make transportation and access to municipal buildings difficult

as when snow is piled, it is often placed in accessible parking areas.

- Snow piles on sidewalks and crosswalks prevent those with mobility assistive devices from accessing municipal roadways.
- Wish to see stronger municipal policies and bylaws around supportive housing and accessible units.
- Difficulty hearing in large or crowded places or events.
- Lack of access to public washrooms.
- Beach accesses are often limited to those who are not using mobility assistive devices.
- Need for more accessible parking.

Question 7: What barriers do you (or the person you are assisting) experience when applying for jobs or volunteer positions with your local government? (Examples of barriers might relate to job postings, interviews, communications regarding employment, etc.)

This question allowed respondents to type/write their own answers. The following feedback was collected:

Feedback specific to a municipality:

Colwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to sit or stand for long periods of time. • Inadequate bus service and lack of stops
Esquimalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination for disability and being transgender. • Lack of accessibility information so I don't feel comfortable applying. • Lack of understanding of what a neurodiverse person may need.
Highlands	None collected.
Langford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sure if hearing loops are available. • Not sure if sign language interpreters are available. • Information overload. • Generally struggle in interview settings • Lack of close proximity parking can lead to lots of walking which I am unable to do. • Timelines to apply are too short. • Perceived or real age barriers • Inadequate bus service and lack of stops • Very few positions available • Unsure of what positions are available. • Stairs generally are a barrier for me accessing volunteer opportunities in the community.

Metchosin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty navigating website. • Need visual diagrams to understand concepts and often, those are not provided or included.
View Royal	None collected.
Sooke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like positions, but currently not able to do them. • Previous volunteer positions were not accommodating, nervous to try again.

General Feedback:

- Difficult or confusing interview processes
- High-level language.
- Discrimination based on being in a wheelchair.

Question 8: What supports are important to you (or the person you are assisting) when working or looking for a job?

Accessible Parking	49
Adapted spaces such as restrooms, breakrooms, reception area, meeting areas, or pathways	42
Modified workstations such as standing desks or wheeled mobility device-adaptive desks	36
Assistive devices such as screen readers, braille displays, text-to-speech software, strobe light/visual smoke alarms, or hearing loops	11
Flexible work hours	55
Shorter workdays	31
Working from home	54
I am not working or looking for a job	71

This question allowed respondents to type/write their own answers. The following feedback was collected:

- Accessible pedestrian and rolling lanes for transportation to and from work.

- Advocacy needed for more bus stops and service so employees can meet work start times.
- Rather than adapted spaces, have them be inherently accessible from the beginning.
- Free and safe staff parking.
- Employer and staff education regarding trauma informed care and accessibility.
- Soft lighting.
- Soft door closing.
- Office space to limit distractions.
- Communication supports.
- Support for neurodivergence.
- Elevators and adequate seating.

Question 9: Please list the top 3 accessibility improvements you (or the person you are assisting) want to see your municipality or the municipality you visit make:

Colwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible parking, especially at events. • Advocacy needed for accessible parking at schools. • Accessible public washrooms • Removal of gravel and bark mulch on trails. • Flat and firm surfacing for trails. • More sidewalks • Wider sidewalks • More pedestrian crossings • Remove “maze gates” at local parks (entrances that include switchbacks). • Wheelchair access to local parks to be improved. • Wheelchair access to beaches to be improved. • Quiet spaces or covered tent at local events for neurodiverse and families to rest. • Have accessibility requirements built into the development and building process. • Signage to indicate terrain and difficulty of trails.
Esquimalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More sidewalks • Wider sidewalks • More bus shelters
Highlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks • Streetlighting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road markings need to be more visible. • Consider installation of “cat eyes” on the roads.
Langford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete sidewalks • Accessible benches • Automatic doors to be mandated in community. • Smoother transitions and curb cuts • Automatic doors with adequate opening time. • Lights at crosswalks • ASL interpreters • Staff training for hearing technology. • Staff training regarding accessibility accommodations. • Pedestrian rolling lanes and paths. • Adult change stations in public washrooms
Metchosin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting at building entrances. • Ramps. • Safer bike access on roads. • More roadside trails that support walking, biking, and mobility assistive devices. • Improve accessibility to Pioneer Museum, Metchosin School. • Paving trails and access to farmer’s market. • Gravelled areas changed to smaller aggregate. • Sound system upgrade in Council Chambers. • Accessibility signage. • Safer street crossings. • Accessible parking. • Advocacy needed for additional bus routes and more service. • Upgrade museum and bookstore halls to allow wheelchair access. • Crosswalk installation across Happy Valley to the MyChosen Café. • Elevator installation in the Metchosin Arts and Cultural Centre Building. • Need for more housing options such as assistive housing, supportive housing, co-ops. • Add participation on Zoom for Council meetings.
View Royal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider sidewalks. • Wider streets.
Sooke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks (need more, and wider ones).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelchair ramps in more places.
--	--

Sidewalks are extremely important to respondents, but it should be noted that these sidewalks are needing to be made of quality materials, adequate width or oversized, and align appropriately with curb cuts and adjoining walking paths or sidewalks.

Question 10: Do you have any additional comments or ideas for improving accessibility in our municipalities?

Colwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using all forms of communication. • Sidewalk and bus stop maintenance during snow events is not sufficient. • Need for additional traffic calming in areas that do not have sidewalks. • More streetlighting • Need for more public washrooms. • Need for rubber surfacing in playgrounds. • Need for accessible park benches to be placed in shaded areas. • More budget for accessible retrofits. • Need for live captioning and ASL interpreters at municipal engagement events. • Install lighting at crosswalks. • Opportunities to work from home with flexible hours or at an adaptive workspace.
Esquimalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more accessible parking. • Reduce foliage and plants near sidewalks and cut back overhangs. • Reduce tripping hazards on sidewalks. • More sidewalks • Connectivity for sidewalks • More accessible parking spaces • Access to sidewalks while areas are under construction. • Website is difficult to navigate. • Accessible access to beachfronts and trails
Highlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible trails • More bike lanes • Wider road shoulders

Langford	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publish results of Langford Station accessibility audit publicly.• Wish for the building code standards to be exceeded.• Need for advocacy to the CRD to improve the access at Atkins to the E&N Trail.• Staff training regarding accessibility and inclusivity.• Boardwalks and lakefront spaces to increase accessibility.• Insufficient parking in downtown core.• Need for both wider and longer accessible parking spots.• Explore possibility of car free roads in downtown core.• Simpler reception system over the phone.• Need for sidewalks and crosswalks particularly on Walfred Road.• Need for more parks and trails in the downtown core.• Reports are difficult to understand and there's a need for visuals to be included.• Advocacy is needed to improve BC Transit service and scheduling.• More playgrounds are needed.• Universal design could be adopted in the City to be a leader.• Need for accessible drinking water stations for humans and their service animal companions.• Provide answers to questions in plain language and take time to explain concepts.• Reduce plants and foliage at corners so pedestrians can be seen.• Sidewalk access at Redington Ave to Millstream Plaza is needing to be improved.• Need for more walkable areas.• Need for engagement with seniors living in care facilities.• Include more part time and remote work options in the job bank on the website.• Need for more green spaces to promote mental and physical health.• Advocacy needed for BC Transit service in the area.• Need for additional safety measure with bike lanes.• More enforcement for illegal parking as it can obstruct walkways and accesses.• Advocacy needed for the CRD to review connections for the Galloping Goose Trail from an accessibility perspective.• Audio Visual in Council Chambers needs to be improved.
----------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting minutes are difficult to find.
Metchosin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Ambassadors to welcome newcomers. • Need for one information hub for accessible features located within the municipality. • Need for flattening and smoothing trails for ease of use with mobility assistive devices. • Lack of housing options may make people need to leave as downsizing or aging-in-place is not an option. • Need for paved or hard surfacing around municipal buildings. • Need for more street lighting. • Need for more parks, trails, and outdoor spaces to have accessible features. • Wish to see public engagement regarding accessible parking.
View Royal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability of public washrooms. • More sidewalks. • Sidewalk maintenance. • More accessible parking spaces. • Separated bike lanes. • Clearer website. • Larger website font. • Active transportation needs an accessibility lens as not everyone can use it.
Sooke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wish to establish a day to celebrate people with diverse abilities. • Need for more automatic doors. • Need for single accessible washrooms with locking doors for privacy. • Connecting sidewalks. • Safer crosswalks. • Opportunities to work from home with flexible hours or at an adaptive workspace.

General Feedback:

- Excited to apply to join the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Municipal advocacy needed to remove utility poles from sidewalks and walkways.
- Electric cars are very quiet and can be a hazard for those with hearing impairments.
- Municipalities could go on a “walk and roll” in their community with those with lived

experience to review challenges firsthand.

- Make use of local agencies and resources that help further accessibility in our communities.
- “Live Chat” feature to speak with municipal staff.
- Difficulty finding support or advocates within the community.
- Local government is confusing; would like opportunities to learn about it.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

OPTIONS:

THAT the Committee:

1. Receive this report for information, and
2. Make this report available on the respective websites, and
Forward this report to the Council’s of Colwood, Langford, Esquimalt, Sooke, Highlands,
Metchosin, and View Royal for information.

SUBMITTED BY: Marie Watmough, Director of Legislative & Protective Services at the City of Langford and the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair.