

TOWN OF LADYSMITH



Accessibility Plan



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Land Acknowledgement

The Town of Ladysmith and members of the Ladysmith Accessibility Committee respectfully acknowledge the Stz'uminus People as the traditional caretakers of the unceded lands and waters on which Ladysmith is situated.

We express our gratitude for the opportunity to live, play, and work in this beautiful territory, and are committed to ensuring the initiatives emerging from this plan support a more equitable and inclusive future for everyone who resides in and visits the community.

Introduction

The Town of Ladysmith is committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment for all residents and visitors.

The Accessibility Plan outlines our strategy to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility, optimizing full participation in community life for everyone.

This plan is a living document that will evolve as we continue to engage with the community, learn, and address new challenges. The scope of the plan includes Town-owned properties, public spaces, and town facilities.





Principles Considered

The following six principles were considered when developing the Accessibility Plan:

- Inclusion
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Self-determination
- Universal Design (*see Appendix*)

Vision and Goals

Our vision is to create an inclusive community where individuals from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, income levels, abilities and gender identities, have equitable access to services, facilities, and opportunities.

The goals of the Accessibility Plan are to:

- Identify barriers and remove or adapt them to promote accessibility.
- Promote Universal Design in all new developments and renovations (see *Appendix*).
- Enhance public awareness and understanding of accessibility issues.
- Ensure continuous improvement and community engagement in accessibility initiatives.



Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Town of Ladysmith established the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) in 2023.

Made up of residents with a variety of lived experiences and expertise in disability-related issues, the AAC has played a key role in developing the Town's Accessibility Plan. The committee will continue working with the Town to make Ladysmith more accessible and inclusive.





Definitions

This section provides definitions for key terms used throughout the Accessibility Plan to ensure that all readers have a shared understanding of the language and concepts referenced throughout the document.

Clear definitions promote consistency, clarity, and accuracy in the interpretation and implementation of the Plan's recommendations.



Definitions

Accessibility

Accessibility involves removing the barriers faced by individuals. These can include, but are not limited to, physical, sensory, cognitive, learning and mental health, and the various barriers, including attitudinal and systemic, that impede an individual's ability to participate in social, cultural, political, and economic life. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent. As we age, our abilities change and therefore an accessible society is one designed to include everybody, at all stages of life.

Diversity

Diversity is understanding that each person is unique and acknowledging the differences that make us individuals. True diversity is the inclusion and representation of individuals from a variety of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences in a given environment. It ensures all individuals are respected and empowered to participate equally, and their unique contributions are valued by everyone.



Definitions

Equity

Equity means making sure everyone shares fairly in both the benefits and the responsibilities of a decision, and that everyone has a real chance to be involved in shaping those decisions. It also means recognizing and actively addressing past and present gaps where some groups have been left out or disadvantaged.

Inclusion

Acknowledging and valuing people's differences to enrich social planning, decision-making, and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive municipality, we each have a sense of belonging and acceptance, and are recognized as valued and contributing citizens. Real inclusion takes place when those already included learn from those who are excluded and initiate change. Inclusion reality is the actual current state and effectiveness of inclusion practices.



Definitions

Intersectionality

Each of us has multiple identities (such as age, race, gender, ability) that overlap and affect how we experience our community. These experiences are shaped by larger systems of power, including laws, policies, governments, and institutions, which can advantage or disadvantage people in different ways. Understanding intersectionality means recognizing how these layered identities and systems combine to create different barriers or advantages for different people.

Privilege

The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities afforded to members of a dominant group in a society or in each context.

Public spaces

In this document, “public spaces” means Town-owned buildings and spaces. It includes streets, parks, fields, sidewalks, and Town-owned facilities.



Definitions

Self-determination

The ability to make one's own choices and pursue the life one wishes to live.

Systemic barriers

Obstacles that exclude groups or communities of people from full participation in, and the benefits of, social, economic and political life. They may be hidden or unintentional but are built into the way society operates. Existing policies, practices, and procedures, as well as assumptions and stereotypes, may reinforce these barriers.

Universal Design

The framework used to create an environment that provides maximum accessibility for people of all ages, sizes, abilities or disabilities (*see Appendix*).

Framework

The Accessibility Plan is based on a framework that provides a structured approach for identifying barriers and guiding improvements, ensuring accessibility is considered consistently across all municipal operations. The framework is divided into five categories, listed below, that reflect how residents interact with Town services, spaces, and information.

- Communication and Information
- Employment
- Parks and Recreation
- Town-owned Public Buildings and Spaces
- Transportation



Framework

Communication and Information

Accessible formats

Ensure ongoing public information is available in formats that everyone can access, such as large print, and digital formats compatible with screen readers.

Communication support

Ensure public meetings and events are accessible by providing appropriate supports, such as sign language interpreters and hearing-assistance systems.

Website

Ensure the Town's website follows best practices for digital accessibility, as outlined in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Accessibility Initiative (www.w3.org).



Framework

Employment

Accommodations

Provide necessary accommodations for employees with disabilities and offer training for staff on disability awareness and inclusion with consultation of appropriate professionals if required.

Inclusive hiring

Promote inclusive hiring practices and ensure that job opportunities are accessible to all qualified applicants as per the Town's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.



Framework

Parks and Recreation

Adaptive programming

Offer adaptive/inclusive sports and recreation programs to cater to individuals with different abilities.

Inclusive facilities

Improve the accessibility of parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities. Ensure pathways are wide and smooth, provide accessible seating and picnic areas, and install adaptive playground equipment.



Framework

Town-owned Public Buildings and Spaces

Audits and upgrades

Conduct accessibility audits of all Town-owned public buildings and spaces. Implement necessary modifications to ensure compliance with accessibility standards, including but not limited to ramps, automatic doors, accessible washrooms, and signage.

Consultation and collaboration

Engage with community groups, municipalities, government agencies, and First Nations, and make sure to consult both the public and people with lived experience or professional expertise in accessibility.

Inclusive design

Ensure new buildings and space designs are guided by the Seven Principles of Universal Design (*see Appendix*), with inclusion in mind from the outset.



Framework

Transportation

Active transportation

Develop and maintain accessible pedestrian pathways, crosswalks, and cycling routes.

Audits

A comprehensive audit of all transit, bus stops, shelters, pedestrian pathways, crosswalks and cycling routes.

Collaboration

Advocate for accessible buses, bus stops and shelters with relevant stakeholders.

Parking

Designate accessible parking spaces close to building entrances and ensure proper signage and access to level curb ramps.





Feedback and Engagement

Feedback mechanism

Establish an online platform for residents to provide feedback and report accessibility issues.

Public consultations

Conduct regular public consultations to gather input from residents on accessibility issues and areas for improvement.

Implementation

Annual review

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will review the plan each year and report its findings to Town Council. The plan will be updated as needed to reflect feedback, new accessibility standards, and emerging best practices.

Timeline

The Accessibility Plan will be implemented over a three-year period, with specific milestones and targets set for each year.



Action Taken

The Town has already undertaken a range of initiatives to enhance accessibility across the community in five key areas: Communication and Information, Employment, Parks and Recreation, Town-Owned Public Buildings and Spaces, and Transportation.

This section highlights the actions taken as of January 1, 2026.



Action Taken

Communication and Information

- Implemented the use of accessible font in Council reports.
- Turned on closed captioning for recorded Council Meeting videos.
- Using Arial font for social media graphics when possible.



Action Taken

Employment

- Adopted the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy statement to maintain a positive workplace culture.
- Town's Poverty Reduction Task Group hosted various employer seminars.
- Established an Employee Wellness Committee.



Action Taken

Parks and Recreation

- Installed an accessible walkway at Transfer Beach.
- Completed more accessible 200-metre section of trail and removed deteriorated stairs at the Holland Creek trail.
- Added an accessible concrete walkway and practice pitch at Lot 108 Park.
- Installed an accessible pathway at Aggie Playground.



Action Taken

Transportation

- See future actions



Action Taken

Town-owned Public Buildings and Spaces

- Installed automatic door openers, new pool access lifts, tactile components and braille signage at the Frank Jameson Community Centre.
- Expanded the bricked pathway around the cenotaph.
- Installed an accessible walkway at the Ladysmith Museum.



Future Action

The Town of Ladysmith is committed to providing public services that are accessible and inclusive for everyone. The Accessibility Plan outlines recommended future actions, organized into the following categories:

- Communication and Information
- Employment
- Parks and Recreation
- Town-owned Public Buildings and Spaces
- Transportation



Future Action

Communication and Information

- Incorporate accessibility and inclusion in future policy revisions where possible.
- Enable closed captioning for Council meeting broadcasts on YouTube and during Zoom meetings when possible.
- Recognize Accessibility Week each year to promote accessibility and inclusion in the community.
- Update the Town's website to include more accessibility features, such as options for colour contrast, print size and language choice.
- Continue to engage with people with disabilities, the public, organizations, business and staff to identify barriers to inclusion and accessibility, and to make recommendations to Council as to how to remove and prevent these barriers.
- Develop processes whereby members of the public can inform the Town of accessibility considerations.
- For all Town projects that involve public engagement, provide clear and easy-to-understand summaries so that community members can quickly grasp the purpose, progress, and outcomes.
- Make documents available in a variety of formats, including accessible online versions, printed copies, and formats compatible with adaptive technologies (such as screen readers and text-to-speech tools).

Future Action

Employment

- Consider hiring a paid, full-time position for people with a disability at recreational facilities to lead programming.
- Work with local schools to provide course credit to encourage students to volunteer and support adapted physical activity programs.
- Add accessibility/inclusion information to all job postings.
- Collaborate with employment support organizations already active in Ladysmith to identify opportunities and strengthen supports for people with disabilities.

Future Action

Parks and Recreation

- Raise awareness of adapted physical activity and recreational activities through sampling opportunities and promotional campaigns that feature members of the disability community.
- Develop donation, loan and rental programs for adapted equipment (e.g., beach chairs, sport wheelchairs) and ensure there is storage available for the equipment.
- Establish a rating scale for Town trails that includes accessibility (i.e., suitable for strollers, wheelchairs, etc.).
- Create an accessibility tip sheet or checklist to support private event organizers (e.g., concerts, developer-hosted open houses).
- Explore partnerships with accessibility focused organizations (e.g., Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Deaf Blind Community Services, the Rick Hansen Foundation, Sparc BC, Disability Alliance BC, Seniors Advisory Council, Sportability BC, Spinal Cord Injury BC, BC Wheelchair Sports, Community Living BC, Inclusion BC and Canucks Autism Network) to create, run, and promote accessible programs and services.

Future Action

Town-owned Public Buildings and Spaces

- Continue to use the accessibility goals outlined in the Town's Official Community Plan (Ladysmith Unparalleled).
- Add more accessible pathways at our parks.
- Add more accessible features to playgrounds.
- Add a pathway with more picnic tables (washroom to Kinsmen Shelter) at Transfer Beach.
- Include a cement pad in front of the Kinsmen shelter for vendors or a food truck to increase the usability of the shelter for all.
- Add an accessible ramp and an automatic door opener to the front main entrance of City Hall.
- Add braille signage to the Downtown washrooms and other public facilities, such as Transfer Beach washrooms, Aggie Hall, all parks washrooms, etc.
- For the Downtown washrooms, install automatic door openers for both doors, air hand dryers and grab bars, and ensure the height of sinks and toilets can accommodate wheelchair patrons.
- Budget to upgrade Town off-street parking lots with improved paving, lighting, and signs so they're more accessible.

Future Action

Transportation

- Execute policy 2.32 of the Official Community Plan to change zoning standards for Van-accessible parking spaces (short-term OCP priority).
- Commence work on policy 2.36 of the OCP to convert accessible parking spaces on 1st Avenue to van-accessible spaces (long-term OCP priority).
- Review the sidewalk inspection procedure and operational management of tree heaves, giving consideration to accessibility issues.
- Install Tactile Walking Surface indicators where required.
- Paint high-vis indicators where required.
- Install audio indicators at signalized pedestrian crosswalks.
- Review accessible parking stalls based on current accessibility needs of the community.

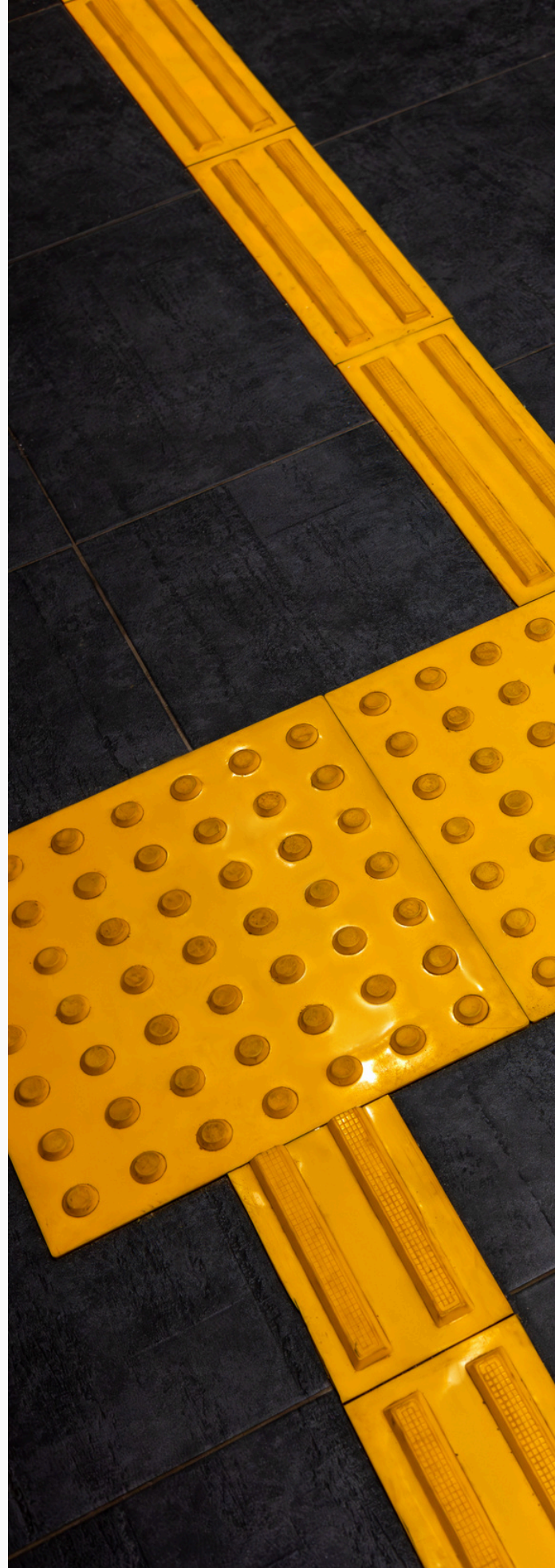
Appendix

Universal Design

The Accessibility Plan is guided by the Seven Principles of Universal Design, which help make environments, products, and communications easier to use and more accessible for everyone.

The Seven Principles:

- Principle 1: Equitable Use
- Principle 2: Flexibility in Use
- Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use
- Principle 4: Perceptible Information
- Principle 5: Tolerance for Error
- Principle 6: Low Physical Effort
- Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use



Appendix

Principle 1: Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Guidelines

- Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- Make the design appealing to all users.



Appendix

Principle 2: Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Guidelines

- Provide choice in methods of use.
- Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision.
- Provide adaptability to the user's pace.



Appendix

Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

Guidelines

- Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
- Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.



Appendix

Principle 4: Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Guidelines

- Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- Maximize "legibility" of essential information.
- Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.



Appendix

Principle 5: Tolerance for Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Guidelines

- Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- Provide fail safe features.
- Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.



Appendix

Principle 6: Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

Guidelines

- Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- Minimize repetitive actions.
- Minimize sustained physical effort.



Appendix

Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Guidelines

- Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- Ensure all components are comfortable and easily accessible for users, whether seated or standing.
- Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.



Appendix

Disclaimer

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Contact Information

The Town of Ladysmith values open and meaningful communication.

Feedback on the Accessibility Plan may be submitted through the following channels:

In-Person

City Hall
410 Esplanade

Phone

250-245-6400

Email

info@ladysmith.ca

Online

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www.letstalk.ladysmith.ca

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