

Accessibility Plan Initiatives

Priority 1: Awareness and Training																	
Initiative	Funding	Status			Comments / Next Steps (Explain status – describe the issue or potential issue)												
		Not Started	Underway	Complete / Operationalized													
1.1.1 Hire the staff position Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Consultant, to lead staff facing initiatives.	Funded			X	Staff member started in November 2023.												
1.1.2 Create an 'accessibility hub' on the District of Saanich Website.	Funded	X			Current plans to update Saanich.ca are in process. Work on this initiative is expected to commence in 2025.												
1.2.1 Provide training to new and existing employees on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why accessibility & inclusion matters; • accessibility legislation; • types of disabilities, invisible disabilities, and intersectionality; • barriers to accessibility & inclusion: attitudinal, physical/environmental, communication, technological, systemic and sensory; 	Funded			X	A grant was secured to support this work. Eleven sessions (in-person and virtual) were held throughout 2024 which 675 staff members and 7 Council members attended. Percentage of trained staff is shown in the table below: <table border="1" data-bbox="1184 1101 1871 1206"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Full Time</th> <th>Part Time</th> <th>Casual</th> <th>Term Certain</th> <th>Overall</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total *</td> <td>76%</td> <td>65%</td> <td>11%</td> <td>89%</td> <td>44%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Total does not include Police and Fire as these Departments have their own learning and development programs.</p>		Full Time	Part Time	Casual	Term Certain	Overall	Total *	76%	65%	11%	89%	44%
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategies for minimizing barriers to accessibility and inclusion; and • inclusive language and creating a sense of belonging. 					Recorded virtual training sessions are now available for new staff and staff who have not attended the training.
1.2.2 Provide workshops to accompany the standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets that will be produced.	Funded	X			Work on this initiative is expected to commence in 2025.
1.2.3 Provide training in disability awareness as it relates to emergency preparedness.	Funded		X		All Emergency Program staff attended Accessibility Awareness Training in 2024. Emergency Program staff are aware of and often review the District of Saanich's Accessibility Plan to further support an understanding of disability awareness and how we can apply it to emergency preparedness.
1.2.4 Provide accessibility communications training to ensure documents meet PDF/UA requirements.	Funded		X		Saanich's Visual Identity Program will be updated in 2025 with accessibility criteria in mind. Initial work has been completed on resource material for PDF documents. Additional progress is targeted for 2025.
1.2.5 Create an effective model for staff training to support persons with disabilities that are in Saanich Parks, Recreation and Community Services programs.	Not Funded	X			This work is anticipated to commence in 2025/2026.
1.2.6 Continue to provide psychological health and safety training.	Funded			X	300 staff have attended at least one session on this topic since 2021.

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1.3.1 Create a photo library with inclusive images for communications materials.	Partially Funded	X			The photo library is expected to be updated with inclusive images in 2025. The extent to which photos can be updated is dependant upon available resources.
1.3.2 Collect diversity data.	Funded			X	A voluntary survey was created for job applicants, new hires, and current staff to self-identify their demographics, and a process was put in place to store these demographics for reference and analysis. Demographics collected include gender, race, and disability.
1.3.3 Create connections with other municipalities to foster sharing of accessibility achievements, opportunities for improvement and knowledge.	Funded			X	Saanich staff are members of the Southern Vancouver Island Social Development Community of Practice. This Community of Practice includes members from municipalities, governmental bodies, non-profits, and educational institutions. The members meet bi-monthly to discuss relevant accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion topics and issues.

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Priority 2: Built Environment Improvements					
Initiative	Funding	Status			Comments / Next steps (Explain status – describe the issue or potential issue)
		Not Started	Underway	Complete / Operationalized	
2.1.1 Incorporate some of the recommendations made in our recent physical accessibility review.	Partially Funded		X		Some adaptations have already been made to Saanich buildings including accessibility improvements to some washrooms, elevator lifts, sound barriers, and pathways.
2.1.2 Continue to action accessibility initiatives through the active transportation plan.	Funded		X		ATP includes short- and medium-term sidewalk improvements. These projects will take 15 - 20 years to complete based on current funding levels.
2.1.3 Continue the recreation centre wayfinding and signage multi-year project.	Funded			X	Full implementation of this initiative is expected to commence in 2025.
2.1.4 Continue to increase accessibility in District parks and playgrounds.	Partially Funded			X	<p>Park redevelopments include planning and design that integrates universal accessibility considerations. In particular, playground replacement projects will improve a playground to be accessible with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concrete ramp into the playground. • Accessible safety surfacing of EWF. • Inclusive play equipment features at ground level and accessible access onto structures with a transfer station.

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive swings – either standalone accessible swing or saucer swings. Inclusion innovations in play equipment design to provide equity in access and play for all (supplier innovations). <p>Renovated and new washroom buildings are designed to be accessible with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible entrances (wide doorways and minimal thresholds). Grab bars and raised toilets. Accessible sink height.
2.1.5 Continue to strive for increased accessibility in all public meetings.	Funded		X		Saanich continues to explore accessibility of public participation in Council Chambers.
2.1.6 Continue to provide various methods for people to pay for various programs and services throughout the District of Saanich.	Funded		X		Partially underway. Delay was due to forced bank transition as Royal Bank purchased HSBC which was our banker. Currently looking into EFT payments for various services.

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2.1.7 Work collaboratively with BC Transit and other partners to ensure feedback on bus stop accessibility is relayed to relevant parties.	Funded			X	District of Saanich recently participated in pilot program with five municipalities and TransLink to study and receive feedback on floating bus stop designs. Through this consultation which included a Technical Working Group, People with Lived Experience Stakeholder Group, and TransLink's Access Transit Users Advisory Committee, a Design Guide for Bus Stops Adjacent to Cycling Infrastructure was published in April 2024.
2.1.8 Review accessible parking stalls within the District based on current accessibility needs of the community.	Not Funded	X			This initiative may be considered in the Facilities workplan in the next 3-5 years.

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Priority 3: Increasing Access					
Initiative	Funding	Status			Comments / Next steps (Explain status – describe the issue or potential issue)
		Not Started	Underway	Complete / Operationalized	
3.1.1 Create an Accessibility Policy.	Funded		X		Work on this initiative is underway and is expected to conclude in 2025.
3.1.2 Produce standardized accessibility guidelines and style sheets for employees.					This action is very similar to 3.3.1. For this reason, this action will be removed from the work plan.
3.1.3 Develop a catalogue of existing and newly procured assistive devices and accommodations for employees.	Funded		X		Accommodations are already in place and any assistive devices required have been provided to employees. Work on documenting the process of accommodations is underway and is expected to be completed in 2026.
3.1.4 Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform the procurement of goods, services, and facilities.	Funded			X	Procurement of goods, services, and facilities is informed by industry guideline from Rick Hansen, American Disability Act Standards, Accessibility BC Act, and other applicable standards.
3.1.5 Ensure all building permit requests meet the BC Building Code requirements.	Funded		X		Saanich complies with mandatory BC Building Code requirements related to accessibility.

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3.1.6 Review emergency planning procedures and equipment to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities have been considered.	Funded		X		<p>Saanich’s emergency plans take into consideration the unique needs of all residents, including those with disabilities. On a regular basis, staff and volunteers train and exercise in recreation centres and secondary sites that would function as reception centres in an emergency and discuss the importance of accessibility. In November 2024, staff and volunteers validated this planning, when activating a Comfort Centre at Saanich Commonwealth Place in response to a structure fire event, and the emergency program was able to accommodate all evacuees including those with disabilities (mobility challenges, wheelchair users, etc.).</p> <p>In 2024, staff undertook revisions to public education materials (Preparedness 101 presentation) to ensure increased accessibility.</p>
3.1.7 Draft a formal guide to personal injury and illnesses, including accommodation and return to work.	Funded	X			Work on this initiative is expected to be completed in 2026.

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3.1.8 Create an equity review guide to support application across corporate decision making.	Partially Funded	X			Work on this initiative is expected to commence in 2026.
3.2.1 Create a feedback mechanism to support public and staff input related to accessibility.	Funded			X	accessibilityfeedback@saanich.ca email address was created for public and staff to provide feedback, put in inquiries, and share comments and concerns about accessibility.
3.2.2 Procure accessible engagement software.	Partially Funded	X			<p>Hello.Saanich.Ca (the districts citizen engagement platform) is designed to be accessible and conforms to Industry Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.2AA).</p> <p>A business process is likely needed to support the DEI program which may include system tools and business workflow. IT will initiate the project and conduct discovery (funded) and if possible, implement the process using already available technology. Depending on the specific requirements, additional tools may need to be procured (unfunded). A business case will be developed as part of the process.</p>

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3.2.3 Create a survey and conduct focus groups to further identify accessibility barriers and achievements in Saanich.	Partially Funded	X			Work on this initiative is expected to commence in 2026.
3.2.4 Continue to promote the staff Accessibility DEI committee to ensure representation and increased feedback from employees with disabilities.	Funded	X			Work on this initiative is expected to commence in 2025.
3.3.1 Create standardized guidelines for accessibility which will inform communications materials (documents, videos, emails, and social media).	Funded		X		Initial guidelines for graphic design standards have been created. This initiative is expected to be completed in 2025.
3.3.2 Continue to write documents in plain language and ensure video recordings of Council meetings are provided.	Funded		X		Saanich continues to explore public access to documents and ensuring video recordings of Council meetings are available.

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3.3.3 Update the District’s website (saanich.ca) to include more accessibility features (it currently has options for colour contrast, print size, and language choice).	Funded		X		Research and analysis are underway to redesign and modernize saanich.ca with accessibility in mind. This initiative is expected to be completed in late 2026/early 2027.
3.3.4 Complete a review of the recreation registration systems for accessibility.	Not Funded	X			Will form part of the 2026 financial planning process.
3.3.5 Complete a review of the recreation centre accessibility online information using feedback from individuals with disabilities.	Not Funded	X			Will form part of the 2026 financial planning process.
3.4.1 Create a process for applicants requiring accommodations during the recruitment cycle.	Funded		X		accessibilityhr@saanich.ca email address was created to support job applicants with accommodation requests. Work on this initiative is expected to be completed in 2025.
3.4.2 Review employment practices for accessibility & inclusion.	Funded	X			Work on this initiative is expected to commence in 2025.

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3.4.3 Ensure all job postings include information about accommodations and remove unnecessary position requirements.	Funded		X		<p>All job postings refer applicants to the accessibilityhr@saanich.ca email address which was created to support job applicants with accommodation requests. In addition, some requirements, such as driver's license, were removed if they were not bona fide occupational requirements of the position.</p> <p>Work on this initiative is expected to be completed in 2025.</p>