



## 2024-2027 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN November 27/28, 2024

Version	Date of Board Approval
#1	November 27/28, 2024

### Introduction

The [Accessible British Columbia Act](#) (the “Act”) was enacted on June 17, 2021. The Act contains a framework for the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) to work with people with disabilities and the broader community to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

The Act’s definition of a barrier is “anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment.” The Act states that barriers can be “caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies and affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.”

As a piece of enabling legislation, the Act paves the way for *future* standards to be made by the Provincial Cabinet (via regulation) that may address the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in all areas, including employment; delivery of services; the built environment; information and communications; transportation; health; education; and procurement.

The Act also contains the requirements of establishing an accessibility committee (section 9), developing an accessibility plan (section 11) and establishing a process for receiving public feedback on accessibility matters (section 12) - these sections are reproduced in Schedule A.

In 2022, the [Accessible British Columbia Regulation](#) subsequently established September 1, 2023 as the date by which the process for developing an accessibility plan and the establishment of an accessibility committee were to be underway. An Accessibility Plan does not need to be completed nor comprehensive as of September 1, 2023 and is intended to be an evolving document, to reflect the priorities of the SLRD as informed by its Accessibility Committee and taking into consideration any public feedback on accessibility.

### Existing Board Direction

At its May 24 & 25, 2023 Regular Meeting, the Board passed the following resolutions:

*THAT the Accessibility Committee be established as a staff advisory committee reporting to the Chief Administrative Officer.*

*THAT the Board be updated on the work of the Accessibility Committee on a schedule to be determined by the Chief Administrative Officer.*

*THAT the draft Terms of Reference for the Accessibility Committee be received.*



*THAT staff develop a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility to help identify barriers and build awareness of accessibility in the community.*

*THAT the following matter be added to the Board Follow-Up Action List (FUAL) for prioritizing and actioning when workplan capacity allows:*

*Staff bring a report to a future Board meeting with options for providing stipends to members of the SLRD's various advisory committees (such as Area B Agricultural Advisory Committee, Area C Agricultural Advisory Committee, and Accessibility Committee) along with potential financial impacts associated with providing such stipends.*

### **The Role of the Accessibility Committee**

The Accessibility Committee is a recommendation-based committee that reports to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The Accessibility Committee has no ability to make any decisions with respect to accessibility matters nor to manage or direct the actions of staff on a day-to-day operational basis, nor to enter into agreements and contractual obligations.

The work of the Accessibility Committee consists of making recommendations to the CAO on the following matters:

- (a) Developing a draft Accessibility Plan for the organization.
- (b) Identifying and assessing accessibility barriers to people in the organization or to people interacting with the organization.
- (c) Removing and preventing accessibility barriers to people in the organization or to people interacting with the organization.
- (d) Once the Accessibility Plan is developed and as approved by the Board, implementing the Accessibility Plan.
- (e) Providing feedback on the SLRD's tool to receive public feedback on accessibility to help identify barriers and build awareness in the community of accessibility.

The CAO has the authority to incorporate into the Corporate Work Plan any accessibility initiatives arising out of the work of the Committee that:

- do not have financial impacts; or
- have financial impacts that can be incorporated into the current financial plan.

If the CAO wishes to advance accessibility initiatives arising out of the work of the Accessibility Committee that require dedicated funding, a staff report seeking allocation of dedicated funding will be brought to the Board as part the SLRD's normal budgeting processes.

On September 3, 2024, the CAO approved the Terms of Reference (Version #2) – these are attached as Schedule B.

## **Guiding Framework**

### Existing Provincial and SLRD Policy

- Accessible British Columbia Act

In developing and updating its accessibility plan, the Act requires the SLRD to consider the principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design. However, the Act is not overly prescriptive and has considerable flexibility in terms of where and how to focus the accessibility plan or the work of the Committee (i.e. internal operations or external operations or both). For example, the SLRD could choose to focus internally on employee training and employment policies and practices or look externally to accessibility barriers.

- BC Building Code

The BC Building Code regulates accessible access and egress as well as washrooms.

- Regional Growth Strategy

The [Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1062, 2008](#) is intended to manage population change, guide decision-making and collaboration, and provides a broad policy framework describing the common direction that the three Electoral Areas (i.e. Electoral Area A is not included) and the four member municipalities will follow in promoting development and services that are sustainable, recognizing a long-term responsibility for the quality of life for future generations.

The SLRD's Regional Growth Strategy includes some high-level references to accessibility; these references are reproduced in Schedule C.

- Official Community Plans

From a Planning perspective, the SLRD has the ability to address and implement accessibility design components through Form and Character Development Permit Areas. These typically apply to commercial, industrial, intensive residential, and multi-family residential developments; see the [Area D OCP](#) (pages 69-77) for details.

- Housing Needs Study

The [SLRD Housing Need and Demand Study - Electoral Areas A, B, C & D dated February 7, 2020](#) identifies challenges and priorities around housing, with accessibility being a component identified in survey responses. This report (including any updates) is available [here](#).

- Current SLRD Mission Statement



The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District's mission is to enhance the quality of life of constituents through the facilitation of regional and community services for the benefit of present and future generations.

### The SLRD's Approach

As noted above, the SLRD currently has a very limited amount of policy on accessibility matters. There is no funding currently allocated for this work (aside from a small amount of funding for the recruitment of committee members). The budget for any accessibility initiatives that could be approved by the Board in the future would have to be reflected in the SLRD five-year financial plan.

Therefore, the SLRD's approach to developing an accessibility plan is to start off simple and focused with the ability to grow over time adding breadth, depth and complexity in response to the following:

1. consideration of the input provided by the Accessibility Committee as endorsed by the Chief Administrative Officer;
2. any approved financial allocations as part of the Board's usual budgetary process; and
3. any legislative changes.

### **About Our Committee**

#### Initial Focus of Committee

The Committee will initially focus on foundational work, such as undertaking accessibility audits and surveys, staff and Board accessibility training opportunities, and regional collaboration/information-sharing. Once an appropriate process is developed and in place from a human resources perspective as well as a privacy perspective, the Committee will initiate efforts to recruit staff members who (1) meet the legislative requirements for committee membership and (2) want to be considered for appointment to the Committee via a self-identifying process. Consideration of recruiting individuals from outside of the SLRD who (1) meet the legislative requirements for committee membership and (2) want to be considered for appointment to the Committee via a self-identifying process will be determined at a future date.

#### Current Committee Members and Background

The Sponsor of the Accessibility Committee is the Director of Strategic Services, who is also, at this time, a member of the Accessibility Committee and the Chair. The Sponsor has appointed the following staff members to the Accessibility Committee:

Position	Year appointed
Director of Corporate and Legislative Services	2023
Human Resources Manager	2023

Director of Communications and Engagement	2023
Director of Planning and Development Services	2023
Director of Environmental Services	2024

All Committee members are voting members, until the occurrence of the following event:

- when there is a minimum of 4 Committee members meeting the legislative requirements for membership, those Committee members who are staff members not meeting the legislative requirements for membership cease to be voting members and become non-voting members.

## **Consultations Conducted**

### Consultations to Date

#### *Staff-Focused Process:*

An initial staff-focused survey was undertaken in spring 2023.

#### *Community-Focused Process:*

An initial community-focused survey is planned to be designed and undertaken by the end of 2026, with feedback received to be considered as part of the 2026 review process.

### Who was Consulted

#### *Staff-Focused Process:*

An initial staff survey was distributed to all SLRD staff. The purpose of the staff survey was to receive preliminary feedback and ideas from staff members on certain aspects of accessibility within the organization.

#### *Community-Focused Process:*

This remains outstanding and is currently scheduled to be undertaken by the end of 2026, with feedback received to be considered as part of the 2027 review process.

### How Consultation Was Conducted

#### *Staff-Focused Process:*

SLRD staff were emailed a survey link that contained 8 questions relating to their role within the organization. The questions asked staff to identify known barriers to assist the SLRD in beginning to understand how to remove these barriers.

#### *Community-Focused Process:*

This remains outstanding and is currently scheduled to be undertaken by the end of 2026, with feedback received to be considered as part of the 2027 review process.

## **Barriers Identified**

### What the SLRD Found (Staff-Focused Process)

In the initial consultation with staff, the SLRD received feedback that identified various barriers, including the built environment, communication, computer software and attitudinal.

Using this feedback, the SLRD has developed priorities that will provide a pathway over the next 3 years to address some of the identified barriers.

### The SLRD's Three-Year Plan

This plan establishes priorities that the SLRD intends to carry out over a three-year period (December 2024 until November 2027).

#### Priorities

- Priority #1: Consider Accessible Design of New Anderson Lake Park in Seton Portage
- Priority #2: Undertake Built-Environment Audit of Pemberton Transfer Station
- Priority #3: Undertake Process Audit of Public-Facing SLRD Services
- Priority #4: Undertake Audit/Assessment of SLRD Employment Processes
- Priority #5: Provide Accessibility Awareness Training for Staff and Board Members
- Priority #6: Collaborate and Share Information with Staff from Participating Member Municipalities
- Priority #7: Undertake Surveys

#### Detailed Plan

Priority	Action	Estimated Timeline	Financial Impacts
<b>#1 – CONSIDER ACCESSIBLE DESIGN OF NEW ANDERSON LAKE PARK (SETON PORTAGE)</b>	Consider physical accessibility feature(s) into the design of the new Anderson Lake Park in Seton Portage, <i>subject to receipt of grant funding and allocation of any required matching funds from SLRD sources.</i>	2024 2025	Subject to receipt of grant funding and to allocation of any required matching funds from SLRD sources.
<b>#2 - BUILT ENVIRONMENT AUDIT OF PEMBERTON TRANSFER STATION</b>	Undertake a built environment audit of the Pemberton Transfer Station, <i>subject to receipt of grant funding and allocation of any required matching funds from SLRD sources</i>	2024 2025	Subject to receipt of grant funding and to allocation of any required matching funds from SLRD sources.



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<b>#3 - PROCESS AUDIT OF SPECIFIC PUBLIC-FACING SLRD SERVICES</b>	Undertake a process audit of how specific public-facing services (could potentially include building and development permit system, front desk/reception services, community engagement process, and how statutory meetings such as Board, Committee and Public Hearings are conducted), <i>subject to receipt of grant funding and allocation of any required matching funds from SLRD sources.</i>	2024 2025	Subject to receipt of grant funding and allocation of any required matching funds from SLRD sources.
<b>#4 – AUDIT/ASSESSMENT OF SLRD EMPLOYMENT PROCESSES</b>	Undertake audit / assessment of how specific SLRD employment processes are conducted (could potentially include accommodations and disability management), <i>subject to receipt of grant funding and allocation of any required matching funds from SLRD sources.</i>	2024 2025	Subject to receipt of grant funding and allocation of any required matching funds from SLRD sources.
<b>#5 - STAFF AND BOARD TRAINING</b>	Undertake accessibility awareness training for staff and Board members to provide education and awareness, to assist in identifying other barriers within organizational processes and services, and to address attitudinal barriers within the organization, <i>subject to receipt of grant funding or if necessary, allocation of budgetary funds in 2026 and 2027.</i>	2025 2026 2027	Subject to receipt of grant funding or if necessary allocation of budgetary funds in, 2026 and 2027.
<b>#6 - REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND INFORMATION SHARING</b>	Engage in regular meetings with staff from participating member municipalities to share information, discuss ongoing initiatives within the region, and determine if opportunities exist to collaborate on accessibility opportunities.	2024 2025 2026 2027	Staff time (Cost Centre #1000 – General Government)
<b>#7 - UNDERTAKE SURVEYS</b>	Design and undertake an initial community-focused survey to identify accessibility barriers to SLRD services and programs.  Design and undertake follow-up staff-focused survey	2026 2027	Staff time (Cost Centre #1000 – General Government)

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

### Monitoring

A monitoring report will be produced on an annual basis and delivered to the CAO (on a schedule as determined by the CAO).

### Evaluating

The SLRD will conduct a review and evaluation of the accessibility plan every three years from date of adoption of the Accessibility Plan.

## **How to Give Feedback to the SLRD**

Feedback can be provided through the [Accessibility Plan webpage](#) on the SLRD website and, once developed, through the SLRD's community engagement platform.

## **Schedules**

Schedule A: Excerpts from Accessible British Columbia Act

Schedule B: Terms of Reference of the Accessibility Committee (Version #2)

Schedule C: Excerpts from the Regional Growth Strategy