

NO: R226

COUNCIL DATE: November 18, 2024

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **November 14, 2024**
FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** FILE: **0550-20**
SUBJECT: **City's Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team ("SALT"): 2024 Annual Update**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommends that Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the progress of the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team ("SALT") in response to the *Accessible British Columbia Act* and the City's development of an Accessibility Action Plan ("AAP").

BACKGROUND

SALT was originally established in 2008 and referred to at the time as the City's 'Measuring Up Committee'. Presently, SALT is a network of community leaders dedicated to full inclusion and accessibility across all stages of life. SALT members meet regularly to provide input on the actions in the City of Surrey's AAP.

In September 2022, the Government of B.C. passed the *Accessible British Columbia Act* to support people with disabilities to meaningfully participate in their communities. The Act legislates municipalities and specific organizations develop an Accessibility Plan. On April 8, 2024, Council endorsed the City of Surrey's AAP, attached as Appendix "I" through the adoption of Corporate Report No R057; 2024, attached as Appendix "II". Since that time, SALT has completed several actions outlined in the AAP.

DISCUSSION

SALT meets the membership requirements of the Accessible BC legislation for an accessibility committee, ensuring compliance with the *Accessible BC Act* (the "Act"). The Act mandates organizations to establish accessibility committees composed of members with diverse disabilities and diverse lived experiences. SALT is actively working to further enrich its membership by seeking representation from the Indigenous community, ensuring that its efforts reflect full inclusion across Surrey. SALT's mandate includes advising on the identification, removal, and prevention of accessibility barriers, in line with provincial standards for creating inclusive environments.

Since establishing SALT, the following items have initiated the following actions:

- Completed community outreach and introduced an improved application and interview process to onboard new members;
- Established a new SALT Terms of Reference attached as Appendix “III”;
- Established a new co-chair position comprised of a non-City staff SALT member to support the City of Surrey Chair;
- Participated in the development of the City’s WALK-it Web Map and WALK-it Program towards creating a more Accessible GIS Map for Surrey (AAP Action 1.1 and 2.0);
- Provided input on the development of the City’s events Accessibility Plan to increase accessibility at City of Surrey events (AAP Action 1.1 and 1.2);
- Provided input on the design of the Nicomekl Riverfront Park Project to improve accessibility features in the park (AAP Action 1.1 and Action 2.1);
- Provided input on the Park Design Guidelines to guide accessibility in the design of Parks (AAP Action 1.1 and Action 2.1);
- Provided input on city-wide Parks wayfinding signage design to ensure signage in Parks is accessible (AAP Action 1.1 and Action 2.1);
- Facilitated collaboration between SALT members and the Internal Accessibility Working Group, a team comprised of interdepartmental City staff leading the work outlined in the Accessibility Action Plan (AAP Action 1.1);
- Began work to create an educational Accessibility Resource Guide to educate and inform City staff and partners on accessibility needs and considerations. The Guide will be available on the City of Surrey’s website in 2025; and
- Planning to host an event on December 3, 2024, to mark International Day of People with Disabilities.

Next Steps

The Provincial Government is working on new accessibility standards for service delivery and employment. These standards may rollout as early as 2025. The City is well positioned to respond to these new standards with the AAP and SALT. SALT will report back to Council annually on updates and progress.

CONCLUSION

SALT continues to advance accessibility initiatives outlined in the AAP to make Surrey an accessible and inclusive community that welcomes and values all abilities.

Laurie Cavan
Parks, Recreation & Culture
General Manager

Appendix: “I”: Accessibility Action Plan
Appendix: “II”: Corporate Report No R057; 2024
Appendix: “III”: SALT Terms of Reference



City of Surrey's

Accessibility Action Plan

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Acronyms

AAP	Accessibility Action Plan
ABCA	Accessible British Columbia Act
ACA	Accessible Canada Act
ASL	American Sign Language
CoS	City of Surrey
IAAC	Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee
PWD	Person with Disabilities
UD	Universal Design
SALT	Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team




Photo: Youth on
the Move Summer
Camp participant



SECTION 1

Introduction



The City of Surrey is situated on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the səmyámə (Semiahmoo), ǵícəy (Katzie), and ǵʷa:ńłəń (Kwantlen) land-based Nations who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial.



Message from Mayor

On behalf of City Council, I am pleased to present the City of Surrey's new Accessibility Action Plan developed in full alignment with the Accessible British Columbia Act. This initiative reflects our commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible Surrey for all members of our community. By embracing the principles outlined in this plan, we are taking vital steps toward removing barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for everyone. Through collaboration with various stakeholders, we have crafted a comprehensive strategy that will address physical, digital, and societal barriers that prevent some of our residents from fully participating in all that our beautiful city has to offer. This plan not only complies with legal requirements, but it aims to create an environment where diversity is celebrated, and all individuals can thrive.

As we move forward in putting this plan into action, public feedback will be crucial to ensuring we are on track with our accessibility goals. Your support is essential as we continue to build accessible infrastructure, enhance public services, and raise awareness about the importance of inclusion. In Surrey everyone matters, so let's work together to ensure that our city becomes a shining example of an inclusive and accessible place for all.

Mayor Brenda Locke
City of Surrey

Commitment to Accessibility

The City will identify, remove, and prevent barriers in all areas of service, programs, and buildings to provide residents with an inclusive and accessible experience.

What we will do

- > Ensure that our programs, services, and spaces are accessible to all.
- > Create an inclusive space for everyone, including visitors and workers with disabilities.

How we will do it

- > Offer clear information and services that everyone can easily understand.
- > Design our buildings and spaces to be user-friendly for everyone.
- > Support our employees in assisting you effectively.
- > Follow guidelines and use tools to create an inclusive and helpful environment.

Values

The values of the City of Surrey guide the way we serve our residents, engage in our community, and work with each other.

COMMUNITY

We care about and contribute to the broader well-being of the community. We strive to make Surrey a great place for our citizens to live, work, invest, recreate, and raise a family.

INNOVATION

We welcome change. We actively look for leading-edge initiatives and welcome new approaches and original thinking. We are committed to continuous improvement; we recognize all experiences as important learning opportunities.

INTEGRITY

We are honest. We are accountable for our decisions. We meet our commitments. We are forthright in our communications. We understand and comply with all laws, regulations, and policies.

SERVICE

Customers are important to us. We want to help our customers. We seek to understand our customers' needs, and actively work to achieve responsive balanced solutions.

TEAMWORK

We support each other. We trust each other. We respect each other. We take a City-wide view of the challenges we face. We value everyone's ideas.

Definitions

For the purpose of the Accessibility Action Plan, the City of Surrey defines the following terms to create a common language to further the work:

Accessibility	Accessibility means that all people can take part in their communities through work, play and other daily activities. ¹
Accommodation	Accommodation refers to the employer’s responsibilities to tailor the workplace to meet the needs of the individual employee under the BC Human Rights Code. The purpose of accommodation is to provide access to employment opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace. ²
Barrier	Means anything — including anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice — that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. ³
Disability	Means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary, or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society. ⁴
Impairment	Includes a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic. ⁵
Universal Design	Process of creating services and environments that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, and other characteristics. ⁶

Acknowledgement of Key Contributors

The City of Surrey extends its sincere gratitude to the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team and Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee for their invaluable contributions and unwavering dedication in shaping and implementing the City’s Accessibility Plan in alignment with the Accessible BC Act.

Their sharing of lived experiences, insightful guidance, expertise, and collaborative efforts have played a pivotal role in creating an inclusive and accessible environment for all members of our community. We applaud their commitment to championing accessibility and enhancing the quality of life for individuals of all abilities within our city.

1 Government of British Columbia <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation/summary#01>

2 Government of British Columbia “Managing Employee Accommodation in the Workplace” Last updated: 2019-04-23 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/managers-supervisors/employee-labour-relations/managing-accommodation>

3 Government of Canada: Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c.10) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/page-1.html#h-1153395>

4 Government of Canada: Accessible Canada Act (S.C. 2019, c.10) <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/A-0.6/page-1.html#h-1153395>

5 Accessible British Columbia Act, SBC 2021, C 19 <https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/21019>

6 BC Accessibility Hub <https://bcaccessibilityhub.ca/resources/glossary/>



Photo: Adapted
Boccia participant



SECTION 2

Framework Guiding Our Work

The purpose of the Accessibility Action Plan (AAP) is to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for individuals working for or interacting with the City of Surrey. These actions will help the City make services and places easy to use for everyone. We will follow accessibility legislation, including:

- > UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- > Canadian Human Rights Act;
- > BC Human Rights Code;
- > Accessible Canada Act;
- > Accessible BC Act; and
- > City of Surrey People Practice – Human Rights Policy.

The AAP builds on legislation focused on accessibility within the Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA) and the Accessible Canada Act (ACA). The next sections provide information on the laws at the provincial and national levels.

Accessible British Columbia Act

The Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA) became law in June 2021. It's an important piece of legislation that sets the way for future regulations that will address barriers to access for persons with disabilities in a range of areas including employment, service delivery, the built environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education, and procurement.

The Accessible British Columbia Regulations under the ABCA came into effect on September 1, 2022 and require certain organizations to meet the following requirements by September 1, 2023:

- > Establish an accessibility advisory committee;
- > Develop an accessibility plan; and
- > Create a public feedback mechanism.

Accessible Canada Act

The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) was passed in 2019, with the goal to make Canada barrier free by January 1, 2040. The legislation benefits all Canadians, especially persons with disabilities, through the proactive identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility in seven priority areas:

- > Employment
- > The built environment
- > Information and communication technologies (ICT)
- > Communication other than ICT
- > The design and delivery of programs and services
- > The procurement of goods, services and facilities
- > Transportation

Develop an Accessibility Plan

An accessibility plan should outline how it will identify and prevent barriers for people interacting with or working in local government. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every three years.

The development of this Accessibility Action Plan meets the ABCA requirements for the City of Surrey to have an accessibility plan.

In the development of the Accessibility Action Plan, the City of Surrey considered the following principles identified in the ABCA:

Inclusion	All residents of the City of Surrey, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.
Adaptability	Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change. ¹
Diversity	Every person is unique. People with disabilities are individuals with varied backgrounds. Individual characteristics including race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and lived experience greatly inform the experiences of individuals. Accessibility legislation should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the diversity within the community.
Collaboration	Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play. Legislation should create opportunities for government, community, and business to work together to promote access and inclusion.
Self-determination	Accessibility legislation should seek to empower people with disabilities to make their own choices and pursue the lives they wish to live.
Universal design	Process of creating services and environments that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities and other characteristics. ²

¹ British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/about-the-bc-government/accessible-bc/disability-consultation/2019-consultation/framework-for-accessibility-legislation.pdf>

² BC Accessibility Hub <https://bcaccessibilityhub.ca/resources/glossary/>

Create an Accessibility Advisory Committee

Under the ABCA, a committee must be created to help the municipality to identify barriers and advise on how to prevent barriers that individuals face when interacting with the organization. The committee should, as much as possible, include:

- > At least 50% persons with disabilities or those who represent those with disabilities; and
- > At least one person of Indigenous background.

The Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (SALT) is reviewing the current terms of reference and membership to continue to ensure compliance with the ABCA.

Create a Public Feedback Mechanism

The City of Surrey must create a process for receiving public comments on its Accessibility Action Plan and on the barriers individuals face when interacting with and working within the organization.

The City of Surrey values input and feedback from residents, to better meet the needs of the community. The City provides various channels for residents to submit their feedback including online forms, email and phone.



Photo: Summer camp participant



Photo: Child playing at the inclusive playground at Unwin Park

Guiding Documents

The City of Surrey sees accessibility as an important part of its equity and inclusion work. Accessibility is included in a number of plans and strategies that guide the organization. By including accessibility as a focus in guiding documents, the City emphasizes its commitment to making Surrey a more accessible place to live and play, both now and in the future.

Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) Strategic Plan 2018-2027

The [Parks, Recreation and Culture \(PRC\) Strategic Plan](#) is a blueprint for determining PRC facility and service decisions until 2027. The plan is a forward-looking strategy that identifies the greatest needs and opportunities for residents, and presents a vision of a healthy, green, inclusive community, where individuals, culture and the environment thrive. The PRC plan will guide future decision-making while allowing the City to be responsive to changing needs and demographics. The plan has two primary purposes: to set direction and to guide investment.

Museum of Surrey (MoS): Accessibility Plan 2022-2025

The Museum of Surrey aspires to be accessible in every sense of the word: physically, intellectually, culturally, and economically. MoS is committed to making visitors feel welcome, comfortable, and safe. The MoS Accessibility Plan was updated in February 2023 and focuses on three themes: programming, building partnership and community. Within these three themes, the MoS Accessibility Plan is further broken into six key areas of action.

Parks, Recreation and Culture: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (EDI)

The intent of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (“EDI”) Policy is to maintain a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment that encourages positive engagement and equitable access to services, programs, parks, and facilities in the City’s Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

Surrey Libraries: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility (EDIA) and Wellness Action Plan

The EDIA and Wellness Action Plan are designed as an ongoing and continuous improvement action plan for implementing the recommendations of the EDIA Committee, stakeholder and community consultation and asset audits. The purpose is to ensure that Surrey Libraries reflects, represents, and sustains the values and principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

Surrey Art Gallery (SAG): Accessibility Plan

The purpose of the plan is to draft and map out the Surrey Art Gallery’s efforts towards integrating accessibility considerations into all work. This includes building on past initiatives to increase our learning and new initiatives in the long term. The plan will include:

- > Formation of an internal working group;
- > Integration of accessibility considerations across departments, such as SAG communications, event planning, language initiatives, website, wayfinding, courses, camps, workshops, family programs, training and knowledge sharing, library, exhibitions, collections, and buildings; and
- > Creation of an accessibility commitment statement involving artists with lived experiences with disabilities.

Age Friendly Strategy

The Age Friendly Strategy for Seniors was adopted in May 2014 as an outcome of an inclusive consultation process that included key elements of an age-friendly city which were developed by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The City of Surrey has experienced significant changes since the initial development of this strategy and while the framework of the Age Friendly Strategy continues to be a solid foundation, the City updated the Age Friendly Strategy in 2023 ensuring it stays comprehensive, inclusive, and adaptive to the evolving trends and challenges faced by our aging population. In addition, the Age Friendly Strategy builds on the City's many overarching plans and strategies to provide an integrated approach to address the comprehensive needs of older adults across the city.

Accessibility Action Plan Community Input

To ensure our plan meets community needs, we engaged with residents during the fall of 2023 through an online survey and six in-person feedback sessions, including five City of Surrey facilities and Semiahmoo House Society. We asked for feedback on community priorities related to the plan's five key focus areas and incorporated this valuable input to update our plan.

Who We Heard From

75,883 informed residents

visited the website, received a direct email, or engaged through social media.

1,383 engaged residents

attended an open house or completed the survey.

*41% of online survey respondents self-identified as having lived experiences as defined as having an accessibility need or being a caregiver or therapist of someone with an accessibility need.



Photo: Inclusive playground at Unwin Park - colour splash sensory play

Our Approach

City of Surrey's Accessibility Action Plan is organized into five key focus areas, aligning with the seven focus areas of the ACA, the standards areas within the ABCA and the City of Surrey's values.

1. Inclusive Service Design and Delivery:

Provide services and programs that are accessible for all abilities.

2. Accessible Communication and Engagement:

Communication and information provided are accessible to all. Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted and can easily share feedback and information through accessible feedback mechanisms.

3. Built Environment and Public Spaces:

Ensure buildings and public spaces are accessible to community members following universal design guidelines.

4. Accessible Employment Practices:

Create an inclusive and accessible workplace for all focused on attracting, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce that includes individuals with disabilities.

5. Accessible Procurement:

Ensure goods and services purchased are accessible by design, where possible, so that individuals with disabilities can use them without adaptations.

About Our Committees

SURREY ACCESSIBILITY LEADERSHIP TEAM (SALT)

Established in 2008, the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (formerly Measuring Up Committee) is a network of community leaders dedicated to full inclusion and accessibility across all stages of life. The purpose of SALT is to make City of Surrey buildings and services more accessible and inclusive by embracing all abilities. This includes educating the community by using the group's diversity and resources to create inclusive environments, remove barriers, develop relationships, and promote accessibility and inclusion. The SALT meets the membership requirements for an accessibility committee.

INTERNAL ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (IAAC)

The Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee was created in 2023 in response to the Accessible BC Act. The purpose of the IAAC is to work collaboratively to assess and improve community livability, inclusivity, and accessibility for persons with disabilities who are City of Surrey staff or patrons.

The committee will work alongside the SALT to provide recommendations and planned actions to the City of Surrey's Accessibility Action Plan in respect to the five areas of focus in accordance with the Accessible British Columbia Act.

The committee consists of internal department representatives that interact with the public and are knowledgeable about the City's Accessibility Action Plan and the five areas of focus. Additional representatives may be needed based on community need and departmental expertise in specific areas.



Photo: Inclusive playground at Unwin Park - braille panel

Key Focus Area	Service Areas
Inclusive Service Design and Delivery	Parks, Recreation and Culture Surrey Libraries Social Infrastructure and Community Investments Finance Surrey Fire Services
Accessible Communication and Engagement	Parks, Recreation and Culture Corporate Services
Built Environment and Public Spaces	Parks, Recreation and Culture Corporate Services Engineering Social Infrastructure and Community Investments
Accessible Employment Practices	Corporate Services
Accessible Procurement	Finance



Photo: Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team member at Newton Recreation Centre using the upper cycle ergometer



SECTION 3

Actions and Implementation

The City has developed the Accessibility Action Plan that is organized around five key focus areas and takes into account all of the services, facilities and communications provided by the City. When creating the plan, the principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design were considered.

Leads	
SICI	Social Infrastructure and Community Investments
CS	Corporate Services
ENG	Engineering
FIN	Finance
PRC	Parks, Recreation and Culture

As the City of Surrey moves forward with the actions listed below, we will continue to work with the SALT and do further community engagement to create an implementation plan and review the Accessibility Action Plan. This would include organizing the actions listed below based on importance. The AAP will be updated every 3 years, as required by the legislation.

PRIORITY

S = Short Term

L = Long Term

O = Ongoing

1 Inclusive Service Design and Delivery



The City of Surrey provides services and programs that are accessible for all abilities.

	Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
1.0	Continue to partner with organizations and persons with disabilities to increase offerings of programs that are innovative and inclusive.	PRC SICI	Ongoing	O
1.1	Involve people with lived experience in service development to gather feedback.	PRC	Ongoing	O
1.2	Encourage all permitted events, City, corporate and private, to have an accessibility plan for before, during and after the event.	PRC	2024	L

2 Built Environment and Public Spaces



City of Surrey buildings and public spaces are accessible to all community members following universal design guidelines.

	Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
2.0	Explore creating an accessible GIS mapping system allowing users to search for information on accessible buildings and services.	ENG PRC	2024	L
2.1	Incorporate accessibility standards into civic facilities and park development, considering the range of disabilities, to ensure new parks and public buildings are accessible.	PRC CS	2023- 2024	O
2.2	Evaluate civic facility design and construction procedures to ensure requirements include accessibility needs and are designed or built according to universal design principles.	CS	2024	L
2.3	Develop an accessibility checklist for operators to use for facility and park audits.	PRC CS	2025	L

3 Accessible Communication and Engagement



Communication and information provided are accessible to all. Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted and can easily share information through accessible feedback opportunities.

	Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
3.0	Develop procedures on the use of technology to make things more inclusive for people with disabilities, including the request process for new accessibility related software or applications.	CS	2024	O
3.1	Create an internal SharePoint accessibility directory site for staff that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility related policies, procedures, and guidelines • Appropriate and respectful language • Neurodiversity terms and definitions, when to use identity-first language • Images that convey independence instead of dependence • Accessibility and inclusion training 	PRC	2024	S
3.2	Develop an accessible communication procedure related to American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and communicating with persons with speech disabilities.	PRC CS	2024	S
3.3	Identify and address gaps in access to council meetings for persons with accessibility needs.	CS PRC	2024	L
3.4	Increase awareness of accessibility features that are currently available through various communication channels including webpage updates, social media and signage.	PRC CS	2024-2025	O
3.5	Update the City's digital accessible approach and resource list (2021) and review/update actions.	CS	2024	S

4 Accessible Employment Practices

Goal

The City of Surrey is an inclusive and accessible workplace for all, focused on attracting, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce that includes individuals with disabilities.

	Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
4.0	Review and update recruitment processes to incorporate best practices in accessibility and inclusion.	CS	Ongoing	O
4.1	Advocate for inclusive and accessible work environments and support universal design principles in new constructions and renovations.	CS	Ongoing	O
4.2	Develop an accessibility and inclusion training plan for staff.	PRC CS	2024	L

5 Accessible Procurement



Ensure goods and services purchased are accessible by design, where possible, so that individuals with disabilities can use them without adaptations.

Action	Lead	Timeline	Priority
5.0 Review and update the Purchase and Payment: Process Manual to incorporate accessibility into the principles of procurement where applicable.	FIN	2024-2025	L

Monitoring and Evaluation

The City of Surrey is fully committed to the principles of inclusivity and accessibility as outlined in the Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA). In line with this commitment, our accessibility plan will go through a review every three years. This regular review will ensure that the plan remains aligned with the ABCA requirements and continues to address the needs of individuals with disabilities in our community. By doing a review, we aim to foster ongoing improvement, identify areas for growth, and ensure that our city remains a place where everyone can participate fully and equally.



CORPORATE REPORT

NO: R057

COUNCIL DATE: April 8, 2024

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **April 4, 2024**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** FILE: **0550-20**

SUBJECT: **City of Surrey's Accessibility Action Plan - 2024**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Endorse the City's Accessibility Action Plan attached as Appendix "I".

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council endorsement of the Accessibility Action Plan in accordance with the *Accessible British Columbia Act*.

BACKGROUND

In September 2022, the Government of B.C. passed the *Accessible British Columbia Act* (the "Act") to support people with disabilities to meaningfully participate in their communities. The Act legislates municipalities and specific organizations to draft an Accessibility Plan by September 2023 to address all aspects of accessibility in municipal services, facilities, and communications. On September 25, 2023, Council endorsed the draft Accessibility Action Plan (Corporate Report No R148; 2023, attached as Appendix "II").

DISCUSSION

A key component of the Accessibility Action Plan ("the Plan") involves integrating community input into its ongoing development. During fall 2023, Parks, Recreation & Culture staff gathered community input through online surveys and in-person engagements at five Surrey facilities and Semiahmoo House Society, resulting in 1,142 online responses and 241 open house interactions (1,383 in total). Additionally, 75,883 people were informed about the Plan through the Accessibility Action Plan webpage, emails, or social media. Of online respondents, 41% identified as people with accessibility needs. Respondents were asked to provide feedback on community priorities in relation to the five key focus areas and related actions identified in the draft Accessibility Action Plan. The following is a summary of the action's respondents felt were the highest priority:

- 38% said involving people with lived experience in service development to gather feedback is extremely important.
- 33% said creating a clear communication process for using ASL interpreters and communicating with persons with speech disabilities is important.
- 31% said creating awareness of accessibility features that are currently available through various communication channels is very important.
- 34% said evaluating facility design and construction procedures to ensure specifications include accessibility needs and are designed/built according to universal design principles is extremely important.
- 31% said creating a clear and open accommodation process for current employees and new hires is important.
- 35% said revising the Purchase and Payment Process Manual to include accessibility considerations in purchasing principles and responsibilities is important.
- In-person feedback emphasized the need for enhanced clarity in the Plan, prompting the incorporation of plain language in the updated Accessibility Action Plan.
- Respondents rated Built Environment and Public Spaces the highest at 49% in terms of priority. Accessible Employment Practices and Accessible Communication and Engagement followed with little variation in ratings.

The update process engaged the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team which consists of well-informed members with lived experience with accessibility. In addition, the updates were collaboratively worked on through expansive representation from various departments in the City through the Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee. The feedback received affirms the Plan is in alignment with community need. The Plan has been revised based on this feedback, emphasizing plain language for accessibility. Pending Council's endorsement, an implementation plan will prioritize actions identified through feedback. The Plan will be updated every three years and brought back for Council's endorsement, as mandated by legislation.

CONCLUSION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommends that Council endorse the City of Surrey's updated Accessibility Action Plan in compliance with the *Act*. The Plan exceeds the recommendations outlined in the *Act* and will address gaps in equity for all people, particularly people with disabilities.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Appendix: "I": Accessibility Action Plan
Appendix: "II": Corporate Report No R148; 2023

(Appendices available upon request)

Terms of Reference

Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (SALT)

Background

Originally established in 2008, the Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (SALT), formerly the Measuring Up Committee, is a network of community leaders dedicated to full inclusion and accessibility across all stages of life. Many of the committee members are persons living with a disability, and thus perspectives are informed by rich and diverse lived experiences.

The form and function of the group has shifted and changed over the years. In 2007-08, the Committee was formed to support decision making and administration of the Legacies Now grants in partnership with the Surrey Association for Community Living. By 2009, the Measuring Up Committee developed an Accessibility and Inclusiveness Assessment for the community of Surrey, and began work on 14 identified strategies to improve accessibility and inclusion. Subsequent rounds of strategic planning, in consultation with Measuring Up, have helped to inform the direction and focus of the group's work.

The Accessible BC Act was introduced in 2021 to make BC more accessible. The purpose is to create a culture where organizations and institutions are actively working to identify and remove barriers to accessibility. Under the Act, the Province, as well as organizations (such as local governments), are required to:

- a) Establish an accessibility committee;
- b) Create strategies to improve accessibility in their communities and/or organizations; and
- c) Receive feedback on how those actions are affecting people with disabilities.

The purpose of SALT is to provide input on the City of Surrey's Accessibility Action plan and help make City of Surrey buildings and services more accessible and inclusive by embracing all abilities. This includes engaging the group's diversity and resources to create inclusive environments, remove barriers, develop relationships, and promote accessibility and inclusion. SALT meets the membership requirements of the Accessible BC legislation for an accessibility committee.

Mandate

The Surrey Accessibility Leadership Team (SALT) enhances inclusion and accessibility by helping to inform the City of Surrey's Accessibility Action Plan and associated implementation plans. SALT is a network of community leaders with the mission to make Surrey an accessible and inclusive community that welcomes and values all abilities.

Role

As passionate community leaders for accessibility, members of SALT work together to:

- Provide input to interdepartmental staff on the Accessibility Action Plan and associated implementation plans;
- Advise on corporate wide accessibility initiatives and projects related to the Accessibility Action Plan;
- Work collaboratively with the City's Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee related to the Accessibility Action Plan; and
- Advise the City of Surrey on enhancing access and how to remove and prevent barriers for individuals.

Applicant Criteria

The Accessible BC Act requires all local governments (and other prescribed organizations) to establish a committee to assist in identifying barriers to interacting with the organization and advise on the removal or prevention of barriers. At least half of the committee members will be people with disabilities, or individuals who support persons with disabilities. The membership must also reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in BC and include at least one Indigenous person.

Additionally, in the City of Surrey, all members must be residents of Surrey, work in Surrey, or volunteer in Surrey. There will be at least eight members and no more than eleven.

Members may include:

- a) Individuals with lived experience of disability;
- b) Family members or caregivers of persons with a disability;
- c) Individuals representing community organization related to the work of SALT; and
- d) Indigenous community members.

Membership Term:

1. Initially, membership is for a term of 2 years.
2. After the initial 2-year term, members have the option to opt-in for another 2 years or opt-out.
3. The maximum consecutive membership duration is 4 years.

Members will have to apply to SALT in the following cases:

1. New members
2. After 2 consecutive terms (4 years)
3. Have left for a term

Membership in SALT will be terminated if absent for more than three consecutive meetings, without providing prior communication of their absence, or more than half of the meetings in a year. Members who have been terminated can reapply.

Personal information is collected under the authority of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for this purpose and for contacting appointed persons with information regarding meetings.

Selection process

City of Surrey staff will solicit applications annually. Applications are received and processed by City of Surrey, Healthy Communities Staff. City staff will review applications and invite all applicants for a City of Surrey volunteer interview. All members must meet all of the City's requirements to be accepted as City of Surrey volunteers. City of Surrey staff will review applications and interview notes and Committee appointments will be made based on best fit in accordance with the Accessible BC Act and the SALT Applicant Criteria.

Full member list of SALT members (Appendix A)

General Terms and Code of Conduct

- a) As City of Surrey volunteers, all members are required to review and sign a copy of the volunteer Confidentiality Agreement, Appearance Release Form and Personal Information Form, as well as complete any mandatory volunteer training as a part of the onboarding process.
- b) Decorum and Debate: Committee members must devote the necessary time and effort to prepare for meetings, arrive at meetings on time, provide feedback in keeping with the Committee mandate and be respectful, considerate of others' thoughts and opinions. This includes using respectful language and tone during meetings and in all communication.
- c) Authority and Reporting: The Committee and its members will not represent themselves as having any authority beyond that delegated in the Terms of Reference ("TOR").
- d) Media/Social Media: Members of the Committee are not permitted to speak to the media as representatives of the Committee or the City.
- e) Committee members are supposed to consider the public interest, not their own interests, in their work on the Committee.
- f) Publicly, Committee members should be supporting the City's position on specific issues.
- g) It is the policy of the City of Surrey to encourage clear and effective communication with all Committee members, stakeholders, and members of the public. Any use of social media by Committee members must, as with all other forms of communication, meet tests of credibility, privacy, authority, and accountability.
- h) Members will not record or film during meetings.

- i) Professionalism: Committee members who engage in activities regarding the City of Surrey or Committee initiatives, projects and promotions are expected to maintain a respectful, constructive, and professional tone that maintains the brand consistency and values of the City of Surrey.
- j) All Committee volunteers must either be a resident of Surrey, work in Surrey or volunteer in Surrey. Vacancies will be filled through outreach to community members and partners; applications received will be reviewed by Healthy Communities- City of Surrey staff.
- k) Conflict of Interest: City policy regarding conflict of interest applies to all Committee members. A conflict of interest exists if a Committee member is a director, member, or employee of an organization seeking to benefit from the City, or if the Committee member has a direct or indirect pecuniary (financial) interest in the outcome of Committee deliberations. Committee members who have a conflict of interest with a topic being discussed must declare that they have a conflict of interest, describe the nature of the conflict, and leave the room prior to any discussions, and must refrain from voting on the topic. Committee members are not permitted to directly or indirectly benefit from their participation on the Committee during their tenure and for a period of twelve (12) months following the completion of their term(s).
- l) To ensure consistency and promote two-way communication, SALT and the City's Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee will have at least one shared City of Surrey staff member attending their meetings and have at least one joint meeting annually.

Meetings

Regular meetings are held 4-5 times annually based on operational need. Additional meetings may be called to liaise with the City or to plan activities or events. All meetings (regular and special) will be coordinated by the chair

Member Responsibilities during meetings

- Attend and actively participate in meetings as scheduled.
- Be prepared for meetings (reading agenda material prior to meetings).
- Engage in collaborative, respectful discussions relating to topics on the agenda, including sharing thoughts, opinions, and recommendations.
- Maintain an open mind, allowing for a variety of opinions to be heard.
- Notify the Chair or Co-Chair in a timely manner if they are unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

SALT Roles & Responsibilities

- a) Effective sharing of information between the City, SALT, and external networks;
- b) Providing input into the planning and implementation of the City's Accessibility Action Plan;
- c) Providing suggestions and recommendations on the recruitment of members;
- d) Providing guidance and support in the evaluation of the Accessibility Action Plan's implementation;
- e) Orienting and training new members; and
- f) Providing input and reflection on the overall function and performance of SALT.
- g) Attendance at regularly scheduled meetings.

The City of Surrey will support members of SALT with appropriate accommodation to ensure that members can fully participate in the work of SALT, including ASL and other types of interpreters and accessibility needs.

Compensation

Committee members are volunteer positions. Successful candidates serve on the Committee without compensation. Joining a committee, commission or board is not equal to – and does not lead to – employment at the City of Surrey. If SALT members engage in supplementary initiatives beyond Committee meetings to support SALT, they may be eligible for honoraria in accordance with the City of Surrey's Honoria Guidelines.

Recognition

SALT members are registered City of Surrey volunteers. They will be recognized accordingly for their time and contributions through the following:

- a) **Tracking of Hours** - SALT members' hours will be tracked to acknowledge their commitment and dedication to serving the community of Surrey;
- b) **Public Recognition** - Opportunities for public acknowledgment of SALT members' contributions to improving accessibility in Surrey for all; and
- c) **Recognition Events** – SALT Members will be invited to City of Surrey volunteer appreciation events where SALT members can connect with one another and with other City of Surrey volunteers and be publicly acknowledged for their contributions. Invitations to dedicated events are a token of appreciation for SALT's commitment to volunteering.

Chairs

SALT Chair: City of Surrey staff representing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

For the first year of this newly formed Committee, SALT will be overseen by City of Surrey staff person serving as chair. During this year, staff and the SALT committee will work on a co-chair model and

process. The role of the chair is to:

- a) Oversee meeting administration including facilitation, scheduling, agendas and communication;
- b) Provide regular relevant updates to the Committee;
- c) Ensure the Committee does not deviate from the agenda for the meeting;
- d) Encourage participation in discussion topics and questions;
- e) Encourage open-minded discussions and allow for a variety of opinions to be heard;
- f) Work alongside Co-Chair to guide the Committee towards fulfilling tasks/projects identified in the Accessibility Action Plan and presenting reports to Council, as applicable;
- g) Work with the committee to set timelines for deliverables identified in the Accessibility Action Plan and associated implementation plans;
- h) Support the Committee to abide by the requirements of the Accessible BC Act;
- i) Build capacity within SALT through member support and effective facilitation;
- j) Maintain strong connection to the City's Internal Accessibility Advisory Committee and suggest opportunities for collaboration and information sharing;
- k) Connect with SALT members outside of regular meetings to support follow-through;
- l) Ensure documentation of process and decisions for succession planning; and
- m) Orient new members by reviewing the Accessibility Action Plan, SALT terms of reference and other relevant materials.

Sub-Groups

Sub-Groups of SALT may be developed to work on areas of focus as identified by SALT and in relation to the City's Accessibility Action Plan. Their meetings will occur as needed. These groups will dissolve after their purpose is achieved.

Reporting

SALT members will provide input on an annual report, written by City of Surrey staff, to Mayor and Council on the topic of SALT and the City's Accessibility Action Plan outlining the work done in the previous year and the work planned for the following year.

Appendix A

Current members

Name	Organization Affiliation	Role
Kimberly Wood		Member
Sylvain Formo	Canucks Autism Network	Member
Susan Bains	Accessibility Advocate	Member
Kiran Aujlay	Surrey School District and Equal Access Collective	Member
Nathan Shipley	Rolling with Nathan	Member
Amit Sharma		Member
Uli Egger	Rick Hansen Foundation	Member
Kim Egger		Member
Aaron Nartey	Mainland Community Services	Member
Jessica Danyk	City of Surrey -Parks, Recreation and Culture Inclusion Manager	City of Surrey Staff - Chair
Ross MacDonald	City of Surrey - Accessibility and Inclusion Coordinator	City of Surrey Staff – Parks, Recreation and Culture
Soraya Elchehimi	City of Surrey - Accessibility and Inclusion Programmer	City of Surrey Staff - Administration Support
Colin Reid	Surrey School District	Surrey School District- District Principle