

DUNCAN ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

July 2023



Introduction

The City of Duncan is a compact urban community, committed to delivering public services that are accessible and inclusive for everyone. The Duncan Accessibility Plan (DAP) represents our commitment to continuous improvement on the policies, practices and built environment that impact our citizens and employees to remove and prevent barriers to full participation with our organization.

In 2021, the Province of British Columbia passed the *Accessible BC Act*. This legislation requires municipalities to establish an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan, and a process for receiving comments from the public on the plan and barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. Having already established the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), and with a variety of options in place for receiving public feedback on accessibility issues, the DAP fulfills the third and final requirement of the legislation.

The DAP was developed by the City of Duncan with input from the AAC, and takes up the “social model” for understanding disability as a barrier or limitation in a person’s environment – whether social, technological, or physical – which limits a person’s activity. The City welcomes ongoing input on this plan and any accessibility issues identified by the public, and is committed to incorporating public and committee feedback into future editions of the DAP.

Message from the Mayor



On behalf of Council, I am pleased to present the inaugural Duncan Accessibility Plan. As a Council, we are committed to ensuring that the work we do is in service to all Duncan residents, and responds to the physical, social, and cultural needs of community members. The 2023 Duncan Accessibility Plan sets the foundation for the work we will do going forward to ensure the City of Duncan is accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Not only will the Duncan Accessibility Plan help us to consider the accessibility of the City as an organization, it comes at an opportune time with several community infrastructure projects about to be implemented, such as the McAdam Park playground, Centennial Park playground reconstruction, and Station Street Placemaking Project. As we move forward with implementing these and future projects, public feedback will be critical to ensuring we are on track with our accessibility goals. We look forward to hearing from you.

Michelle Staples
Mayor, City of Duncan

Message from the Committee Chair



The City of Duncan has long been committed to accessibility, and for decades has had a committee established to consider accessibility issues. The Committee represents a diverse group of people with knowledge and lived experience of disability issues. We brought this to the table when reviewing the draft Duncan Accessibility Plan and will continue to do so in the work of the Committee and for future editions of the Plan.

The Duncan Accessibility Plan is an important tool, informed by community feedback directly to the City and through the AAC, that will ensure that accessibility and inclusivity remain front of mind for future projects and initiatives.

Carol Newington
Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

Territorial Acknowledgement

The Duncan Accessibility Plan acknowledges that the City of Duncan and its residents reside on the ancestral and unceded territory of Cowichan Tribes, a Coast Salish people.

In the spirit of reconciliation, the DAP also acknowledges the disruptive legacy of colonialism, and in particular the dispersal of the Indigenous people onto limited reserve lands, along with the erosion of traditional food gathering, ceremonial and cultural practices, and systems of governance during the building of what is now, in part, the City of Duncan.

The DAP affirms that the City of Duncan is committed to working with Cowichan Tribes to acknowledge and respect their long-standing presence and Indigenous Rights and Title, respond to the adverse impacts of colonialism, and strive to advance the process of reconciliation at the local level.

Objectives

The DAP responds to the requirements of the *Accessible BC Act* to develop a plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. It builds upon the foundation set within the City's draft Official Community Plan (OCP) to foster a safe, supportive, and inclusive community that collaborates to provide equal opportunities for residents from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, income levels, ability and gender identities. The OCP further indicates that the City will work to ensure that public facilities and infrastructure are universally accessible and inclusive for all ages, abilities, and needs, and the DAP expands the scope of our work to include a review of organizational policies and practices to support greater accessibility and inclusion.

In keeping with the *Accessible BC Act*, the City will review and update the DAP once every three years in consultation with the AAC. Future updates will include public feedback received by the City through its various channels, including the Small Town. Big Conversations. public engagement platform, online Issue Reporting system, email, phone, and public input at Council and Committee meetings. With each update, the following principles will be considered:

- Inclusion
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Self-determination
- Universal design

What We Are Doing

The City of Duncan has already begun the work of improving the accessibility and inclusiveness of our organization. Core to this is having ample opportunities for input from the community. This has been achieved through the establishment of the AAC and a variety of public feedback mechanisms. Additionally, the City has taken steps to identify and remove physical barriers to engagement with City Hall and the built environment.

Committee Input

The Accessibility Advisory Committee works collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility and inclusion, focusing on the experiences of people with disabilities. The AAC provides advice to Council on strategies to reduce social, physical, and sensory barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of community life.

AAC members bring a wide range of nonpartisan views and experience with disability issues to ensure that Council hears the widest possible perspective. Half of the committee's membership is composed of people with disabilities or people who support individuals with disabilities. The AAC meets at minimum once per year, with additional meetings held at the call of the Chair.

The AAC has provided input on this inaugural DAP and will be asked to provide further input on future editions.

Feedback Mechanisms

The City has established ways in which the community can engage with the City on accessibility matters. These include a permanent forum on the Small Town. Big Conversations. public engagement platform which launched in tandem with the DAP, public input opportunities at Council and Committee meetings, the Accessibility & Inclusiveness postcard, and an online Issue Reporting system at duncan.ca through which the public can report accessibility issues for staff review and follow up.

The City also welcomes feedback by phone, email and in person at City Hall. Find out how to engage with us in our “Get in Touch” section.

Accessibility Audit

In 2021, Universal Access Design submitted to the City a study of streetscapes within the municipality as part of the Transportation and Mobility Strategy. The study produced a table of location-specific recommendations to improve the accessibility of our built environment.

Subsequently, the AAC reviewed the table of recommendations and prioritized the items to create an Accessibility Audit Workplan (AAW) for the City to follow when resources permit and opportunities arise. Find the AAW appended at the end of this plan.

City Hall

City Hall is located in a heritage building established in 1914. The City has taken several steps to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of the building, including the installation of an exterior wheelchair ramp with automatic door opener to access the building, an interior wheelchair ramp into Council Chambers, an elevator, and an accessible washroom.

Additionally, in acknowledging the colonial history of the building in which City Hall is located, the City invited Cowichan Tribes to perform a candling ceremony to cleanse the building to make it accessible and inclusive for indigenous community members.

Accessibility in the Workplace

Sensory information such as lights, sounds and smells may prevent participation in an environment. In 2015, the City approved a Scent Sensitive Administrative Policy to increase awareness and education for our employees and the public who access our buildings so that we continually support a scent sensitive working environment.

The City also supports staff in the workplace by providing adaptive tools that support the health and comfort of employees in the course of their duties.

What We Will Do

This section forms the crux of the DAP, outlining the actions identified to improve accessibility and inclusion for those working for and interacting with the City of Duncan. Implementing these actions will require contributions by staff across City departments. Actions will be pursued as resources permit and as opportunities arise, and staff will seek out grant opportunities to further support this work.

The City is committed to working in collaboration with people with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure that the accessibility and inclusion work we do aligns with the lived experience of people with disabilities.

CREATE A CULTURE OF ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

Action Item	Department
Update the DAP every three years in accordance with the <i>Accessible BC Act</i> .	Corporate Services
Incorporate accessibility and inclusion in future policy revisions where possible.	Corporate Services
Update the Customer Service Policy to identify the ways in which staff can support accessibility in their interactions with members of the public.	Corporate Services
Update the Human Resources – Recruitment Administrative Policy to ensure job postings and job descriptions clarify inclusive hiring practices.	Corporate Services
Update the New Employee Orientation Policy with information on how employees can request accommodations.	Corporate Services

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Action Item	Department
Review the City's Public Engagement Policy with an accessibility lens.	Corporate Services
Update the City's Communications Plan with an accessibility lens, with particular attention to delivering information to citizens who primarily use non-electronic forms of communication.	Corporate Services
Maintain a permanent forum on Small Town. Big Conversations. to facilitate ongoing public input on the DAP and accessibility issues in the community.	Corporate Services
Enable closed captioning for Council Meeting broadcasts on YouTube and during Zoom meetings.	Corporate Services
Update the City's Public Hearing Process policy to describe what accommodations can be made for accessible participation.	Corporate Services
Work with the Accessibility Advisory Committee to update the Accessibility & Inclusiveness postcard.	Corporate Services
Recognize AccessAbility Week annually to promote accessibility and inclusion in the workplace and in the community.	Corporate Services

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Action Item	Department
Continue to apply the accessibility criteria outlined in OCP Development Permit Area guidelines.	Planning
Include accessibility features when developing new parks and green spaces.	Engineering and Public Works
Update the City's Building Accessibility for Disabled Persons Policy.	Planning
Update the City's Public Art Policy with an accessibility lens.	Planning
Identify priority projects from the Transportation and Mobility Strategy Accessibility Audit Workplan for Council consideration during the annual budget and capital project planning discussions.	Public Works & Engineering
Investigate expansion of options for online payments.	Finance

Get In Touch

Join the conversation at Small Town. Big Conversations.

bigconversations.duncan.ca

Find us on the web at duncan.ca.

Report an accessibility issue at duncan.ca/issue-reporting/

Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/CityofDuncan

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Transportation and Mobility Strategy

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT WORKPLAN

The location-specific items in this document were identified through the Accessibility Audit completed in 2021 as part of the City of Duncan's Transportation and Mobility Strategy. At its meeting on July 11, 2023, the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee reviewed and updated the list, and identified the following as priorities:

- Upgrade all pedestrian crossings noted in the Workplan in accordance with current best practices.*
- Complete all recommended improvements at Canada Ave/Duncan St/Ingram St/Queens Rd (First railway crossing).

Canada Ave / Duncan St / Ingram St / Queens Rd (First railway crossing)

- Install Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs) in the curb ramps at the intersection of Canada Ave and Ingram St and at the intersection of Duncan St and Ingram St*
- Redesign pedestrian path of travel at the island by creating a level passage*
- Ensure that all curb ramps at these two intersections align with the path of travel*
- Install flashing pedestrian sign at south corner of Duncan St and Queen Rd to improve visibility for East/West traffic*

Canada Ave / Duncan St (Second railway crossing aligned with Kenneth St)

- Redesign the sidewalk/ramp combinations to reduce the slope to maximum 1:12*
- Paint high-vis indicators along the edge of the sidewalk/ramp combinations in the parking lot
- Realign the sidewalk/ramp combination to create a straight path of travel from Duncan St to the opposite side of Canada Ave*

Canada Ave / Duncan St (Third railway crossing through Charles Hoey Park)

- Install TWSIs on all curb ramps related to this pedestrian crossing*

Government St / Trunk Rd / Canada Ave / River Rd / Duncan St

- Install audio indicators for the pedestrian crossing signal at the northwest corner of Canada Ave and Government St*
- Upgrade curb ramps at the pedestrian crosswalk at Cowichan Way and Trunk Rd intersection to align with the pedestrian path of travel*
- Ensure that all curb ramps incorporate TWSIs and linear tactile indicators*
- Provide a level landing area at the top of the curb ramp on the east side of River Rd near the pedestrian crossing signal button*
- Upgrade the sidewalk along Government St to remove all trip hazards and surface degradation

Jubilee St (Between Government St and Kenneth St)

- Install correctly designed curb ramp adjacent to the accessible parking stall
- Ensure that when street design is upgraded, that sidewalks have a minimum 1200mm width
- Consider providing a level path of travel at all driveway transitions to mitigate the relatively steep side slope of the sidewalk

Jubilee St / Government St

- Upgrade Government St across from Jubilee to create a clear sidewalk path of travel beside/around accessible parking stall
- Ensure that curb ramps on Jubilee St incorporate TWSIs and linear tactile indicators*
- Redesign curb ramps at Jubilee St and Government St to align with the path of travel*

Station St (Between Craig St and Government St)

- Install pedestrian controlled signaling at mid-block crosswalk*
- Upgrade transition from crosswalk to sidewalk on both sides to remove uneven surfaces that may represent a trip hazard*
- Install TWSIs on each side of this mid-block crosswalk*
- Install a ramp adjacent to the designated accessible parking stall to allow for sidewalk access without travelling through vehicle path of travel
- Install TWSIs and tactile direction indicators at the crosswalk at Craig St and Station St*

Trans-Canada Highway (Between Coronation Ave and Trunk Rd)

- Upon upgrades to this sidewalk area, incorporate trowel grooves in direction of path of travel to assist person with limited vision or who uses a white cane

Trans-Canada Highway (Entrances to “The Farm” and Ramada)

- Highly recommended to install a pedestrian-controlled crosswalk across Trans Canada Highway at this location*
- Upgrade pedestrian crossing at the entrance to “The Farm”, including adding linear tactile indicators along the path of travel and TWSIs on each side of the driveway*
- Ensure that regular maintenance policy provides for clear path of travel and removal of vegetation encroachment
- Upgrade transition at the “Imperial Welding” driveway to reduce slope of sidewalk
- Upgrade sidewalk to remove sections that may present a trip hazard due to uplift or surface degradation

Trans-Canada Highway / Coronation Ave

- Upgrade intersection design by redesigning curb ramps to align with crosswalks and provide direct path of travel*
- Ensure curb ramp install includes TWSI's correctly positioned and incorporate current wayfinding features*
- Repaint yellow curbs
- Reposition crosswalk call button to area that can be accessed by someone using a mobility aid*

Trans-Canada Highway / Dobson Rd

- Increase the width of the curb ramps at the Dobson Road pedestrian crosswalk and ensure that TWSIs and linear tactile indicators are incorporated in the new design; ensure that curb ramps are aligned to path of travel*
- Highlight pedestrian crossing by including a painted crosswalk*

Trans-Canada Highway / Trunk Rd

- Upgrade intersection design by redesigning curb ramps to align with crosswalks and provide direct path of travel*
- Ensure curb ramp install includes TWSI's correctly positioned and incorporate current wayfinding features*
- Repaint yellow curbs

Trunk Rd (Between Brae Rd and Trans-Canada Highway)

- Upgrade all curb ramps from Brae Road to St Julien along Trunk Rd to reflect current best practices*
- Upgrade all pedestrian crossing activation buttons to current best practice*
- Ensure that the island at Ypres St crossing has level passage*
- Upgrade all Trunk Rd tree wells by removing trip hazards
- Upgrade sidewalk crossing at Petro-Can to remove all trip hazards and uneven surfaces*