



Accessibility and Inclusion Plan

Village of Pemberton and Pemberton and District Library

Introduction

About the Organization

The Village of Pemberton is located within the unceded territory of the Lilwat Nation and honours the language, culture, and history of the Liiwat7ul. The Village acknowledges the rich history of our First Nations neighbours and is committed to continued learning to understand the important role the Lilwat Nation peoples have in the Pemberton Valley.

Incorporated in 1956, the Village comprises of approximately six (6) square kilometers and is home to over 3400 residents and a vibrant business and agricultural community. The Village of Pemberton manages municipal planning and development, park operations, recreation facilities and amenities, public utilities, bylaws and enforcement, fire rescue, fiscal planning and financial services, legislative services, human resources, communications, and the administration of the Pemberton's Official Community Plan. You can learn more about the Village of Pemberton at www.pemberton.ca

The Pemberton and District Public Library's vision is to be the hub of our dynamic communities by providing a place to connect and inspire through ideas, programs, resources, and technologies. They are committed to and are guided daily by their values that inform everything they do: Accessibility, Respect, Integrity, and Resourcefulness. You can learn more about the Library at www.pembertonlibrary.ca

Our Accessibility Story

The Village of Pemberton and the Pemberton and District Public Library have begun the journey to embark on transforming our communities Accessibility and Inclusivity. Recognizing the diverse needs of our residents is a priority and making all municipal services and facilities accessible to everyone is our goal. We recognize that we have significant gaps and we are striving to ensure we can develop comprehensive strategic plans to improve. We are committed to accessibility and inclusivity.

Message from Leadership

As the Chief Administrative Officer, We are excited to present the new Accessibility and Inclusion Plan, aimed at ensuring that all residents can fully participate in our community. Our commitment is to create an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of ability, can access and enjoy all services and amenities. We invite you to join us in this journey, share your experiences, and provide feedback to help us continually improve. Together we can make our community a model of inclusivity.

Message from Accessibility Committee

We recognize the diverse needs of all our residents and are dedicated to ensuring that every service and

facility is accessible to everyone. Through comprehensive planning, community engagement, and continuous improvement we will make strides toward a better future. Your feedback is invaluable and we will continue to work closely with as your Accessibility and Inclusion Committee, all residents and organizations. Together we can build a community where everyone feels welcomed and valued.

Acknowledgement of Key Contributors

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Territorial Acknowledgement

The Village of Pemberton and the Pemberton and District Public Library are situated on the unceded territory of the Lilwat Nation and honours the people, the language, culture, and history of the Lilwat7ul.

Definitions

VOP – Village of Pemberton

PDPL - Pemberton and District Public Library

AIP – Accessibility and Inclusion Plan

ABCA – Accessible British Columbia Act

Executive Summary

Everyone benefits from accessibility and inclusion. People’s abilities are in a constant state of change, whether this is recovering from an injury, managing age-related sensory deterioration, learning to walk, or simply dealing with the temporary inconvenience of walking in snow.

The purpose of the Village of Pemberton (VOP) and the Pemberton and District Public Library (PDPL) Accessibility and Inclusion Plan (AIP) is to provide actions that identify, remove, and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting within our organizations. These actions will further the VOP’s and PDPL’s efforts to make workplaces, services and built environments accessible and welcoming to people of all

ages and abilities. This AIP also enables the VOP and PDPL to meet the requirements of the *Accessible British Columbia Act* (ABCA), which came into force for municipalities and libraries in British Columbia (BC), on September 1, 2022.

The actions are intended to educate staff, provide them with assessment tools, and identify, eliminate, and prevent barriers. These actions will be pursued as resources permit and as opportunities arise and will be adjusted as new information becomes available.

The Accessible British Columbia Act received royal assent on June 17, 2021. The Act is an important piece of enabling legislation that paves the way for future standards that will address barriers to access for people with disabilities in a range of areas. Part 3 of The Act describes requirements for government and the other Prescribed Organizations to address accessibility. Part 3 of the Accessible BC Act requires organizations listed in the regulation to:

- Establish an accessibility committee
- Develop an accessibility plan
- Create a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility

The purpose of preparing an AIP is to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the VOP or the PDPL. The AIP must be updated at least once every three years and in the development of the AIP feedback from the community must be considered as well as the AIC must be consulted.

The public can reach the VOP to provide comments regarding the AIP and barriers to individuals in or interacting with through admin@pemrecinfo.ca or the PDPL at info@pembertonlibrary.ca

Framework Guiding our Work

Accessible BC ACT Principles (from the ABCA Act)

Accessibility Plan

11 (1)An organization must develop a plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.

(2)An organization must review and update its accessibility plan at least once every 3 years.

(3)In developing and updating its accessibility plan, an organization must consider the following principles:

- (a)inclusion;
- (b) adaptability;
- (c) diversity;
- (d) collaboration;
- (e) self-determination;
- (f) universal design.

(4)In developing its accessibility plan, an organization must consult with its accessibility committee.

(5) In updating its accessibility plan, an organization must

- (a) consider any comments received under section 12 [public feedback], and
- (b) consult with its accessibility committee.

Public Feedback

12 An organization must establish a process for receiving comments from the public on

(a) the organization's accessibility plan, and

(b) barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.

Existing Policies

At the current time, the VOP and PDPL do not have in place any policies that specifically address accessibility and inclusion. We recognize that policy development is important and will be a part of our work moving forward as we establish our working Accessibility Committee, a mechanism to collect feedback from the community and continue to address the accessibility barriers and inclusion concerns that are identified throughout the process, both internally and externally.

About our Committee

Initial Focus on Committee

The committee's initial focus has been on identifying barriers for the Library and the Village of Pemberton.

Recruitment

Committee recruitment occurred in the Fall of 2023, it was open to all members of the community to apply and we were very grateful to have had many applicants ensuring that a diverse demographic of needs are being addressed throughout the process of creating the AIC Plan.

Committee Members and Background

Emma Gillis, PDPL Representative
Christine Burns, VOP Representative
Cindy Filipenko, Community member at large
Darolyn Da Silva, Community member at large
Stephanie Nicoll-Russell, Community member at large
Fran Cuthbert, Community member at large
Wayne Wiltse, Community member at large
Sammy Losee, community member at large
Sheena Fraser, Community member at large
Christine Andrew, Community member at large

Consultation

Consultations to date

At the VOP and the PDPL we are dedicated to raising awareness, identification and removal the barriers to access and inclusion within our community. This is a new journey for us and at this current time we have not had any formal or informal consultations conducted and there are no records of this type of consultation being done in the past. One of the goals of having this plan in place is to bring staff and council together to address the existing barriers to access in a more effective and inclusive way, to strategize ways of working with the community to identify barriers and find ways of reducing them and preventing them in future development projects, to bring awareness to the BCAC, and to do these things while keeping in mind the disability motto, “Nothing About Us Without Us”, we want to work with the community on this work and not make decisions on behalf of the community about what we think the barriers are to access and inclusion without having a lived experience perspective.

Who was Consulted

After establishing our first Accessibility Committee as of November 1, 2023, all of our current consultation has come through them and their lived experience of disability and how they navigate our public and community spaces and what barriers they have faced to access and inclusion.

How Consultations will be conducted

Consultation with the Accessibility Committee was generated through discussions during our committee meetings with staff, occurring quarterly and lasting for approximately 2 hours each. Feedback was documented by staff and committee members were asked about areas of priority.

When we think of how we might address this in the future, we hope to be able to conduct regular public surveys, have a more accessible website with a more robust way of gathering feedback from the community, looking at ways of having paid consultants with lived experience participate in creating some white papers of accessibility, so that there can be consistency. For example, what does our ideal accessible washroom look like. If a white paper was created with the wish list of things that we wanted to see (above and beyond BC building code), then it can be given to developers and design firms, making all accessible washrooms in our community predictable and as consistent as possible.

Key Discussion Themes

We want accessibility to be overarching in everything we do, from building infrastructure, design of public spaces, internal hiring practices, recreation programs within our community, and events we plan for public enjoyment and engagement. These key themes enhance for us this idea and need for accessibility white papers, accessibility policies, inclusive hiring, and doing everything with “Nothing about us without us” being top of mind.

A council appointed Accessibility Advisory Committee is also top of our list, as we believe that to move accessibility and inclusion forward, a more formal committee and route to council needs to be established and that this line of communication between the two should be on an ongoing basis and

part of overall relationship building. Many council appointed accessibility advisory committees operate in this way and the trusting and respectful relationship is key to the Disability Justice Movement and building greater accessibility and inclusion in our communities.

And, like most communities, accessible and affordable housing has been a key theme and will continue to be moving forward.

Feedback Mechanism

Feedback Mechanism Development

At present, the one way that is available for members of the community to share any feedback is through our website.

Our plans moving forward are to consider how we can make the process of reaching people in the community and gathering their feedback, as accessible and inclusive as possible.

A Manager of Recreation Services, could be a point person dedicated to community outreach, event organization, creating surveys, collecting and collating feedback and being a front facing person to the public to listen to their experiences in the community. Whether by phone, leaving voice mail, recorded video, an in-person meeting, an online meeting, ASL, a language other than English, we want the feedback to come to us in the way that is most accessible for the individual sharing it.

Barriers Identified

What we found-Internal Review

We recognize that the barriers to access and inclusion in the VOP and PDPL exist and need to be addressed, mitigated, removed and prevented moving forward. As we have just established our first Accessibility Committee (and hope to have it become council appointed as soon as possible), we know that there is a tremendous amount of work to be done.

One of the first things we can do is to perform an internal survey to identify staff biases and then prioritize internal training on Disability Justice, Access and Inclusion. Training staff on how to offer support to people with disabilities while maintaining their dignity, seems like an “easy” thing to do.

However, not everyone knows what the most up to date and respectful language is and what the techniques are available to support people in a specific space or environment.

Having accessible and inclusive spaces is important, but if we are missing the dignity piece around the disability experience, then we have not made safe spaces for the community.

It will take planning and prioritization of capital projects, for example, we have no accessible access to the main floor of our municipal building, where the staff offices are, creating a barrier to employing someone who uses a mobility device or has difficulty with stairs.

What we Heard

Through the limited feedback we have received through our website, we acknowledge that community members face barriers related to physical infrastructure, parking lots, sidewalks, pedestrian signals and signage, our website is a barrier for screen reader users and is not very user friendly, in general.

If there was a better way of collecting and collating feedback from the community, I am certain we would learn about a multitude of barriers existing both in outdoor and indoor spaces.

Actions Taken

Creating our first Accessibility Committee and developing an Accessibility Plan have been our first significant and formal way to start addressing some of the barriers faced by our community members who live with disability.

Identifying ways of separating accessibility projects into categories, like long-term, short-term, priority, capital, etc, will be something we want to look deeper into. For example, for barriers that we can reduce immediately, how can we make this happen in 30 days or less.

We are wanting to look at all of our existing policies through an accessibility lens and apply such lens for any future created policies.

Actions taken thus far have been minimal, but the implementation of our Accessibility Committee and Access and Inclusion Plan will bring together staff and community who are dedicated to accessibility and will foster ways of identifying where we are at on the accessibility continuum and how to plan best for moving forward with meaning and purpose.

Our 1-3 year Plan

Summary

In looking at the next three years, our plan is to address the following priorities:

Priority #1 – Creating an accessibility policy, reviewing and applying accessibility lens to existing policies,

Priority #2 – A Council appointed Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee.

Priority #3 – Accessibility and Inclusion awareness training and resources for staff.

Detailed Plan

Priority #1 – Creating an accessibility policy, reviewing and applying accessibility lens to existing policies,

ACTION: Create accessibility policy/apply accessible lens to all existing policies

DETAILS: Hire an accessibility consultant with lived experience of disability to support the work of creating policies and applying the access lens to existing policies, reviewing for dignified and appropriate language, lived experience expertise, and to conduct staff training on applying accessibility lens to current and new policies. These consultations can be done virtually and/or in person.

TIMELINE: Create Accessibility and Inclusion Policy 2025, Applying accessibility lens to existing and new policies by 2027.

Priority #2 – A Council appointed Accessibility and Advisory Committee

ACTION: Have Council appoint the Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee as a Committee of Council.

DETAILS: Make recommendation to council that they vote on a council appointed committee. Have a community member with a disability put the motion on the table during a council meeting.

TIMELINE: 2025

Priority #3 – Accessibility and Inclusion awareness training and resources for staff.

ACTION: Have Council approve budget for staff training and resources.

DETAILS: Establish a training budget recommendation for Council approval for staff and Council to participate in. And establish resources for staff that outlines how

TIMELINE: 2025-2026