

# DISTRICT OF PEACHLAND ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## ACTION PLAN



**OUR VISION IS TO  
SUPPORT AN  
INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCESSIBLE  
COMMUNITY  
THAT ENSURES  
EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITY  
WITHIN OUR  
COMMUNITY.**

# PEACHLAND ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The District of Peachland acknowledges that we have the privilege of facilitating our work on the traditional territories of the Syilx Okanagan peoples.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Accessibility Action Plan aims to outline strategies and actions to improve accessibility and inclusivity in Peachland, British Columbia. The plan focuses on ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to facilities, services, and opportunities within the community. By promoting accessibility, Peachland can become a more inclusive and welcoming place for everyone.



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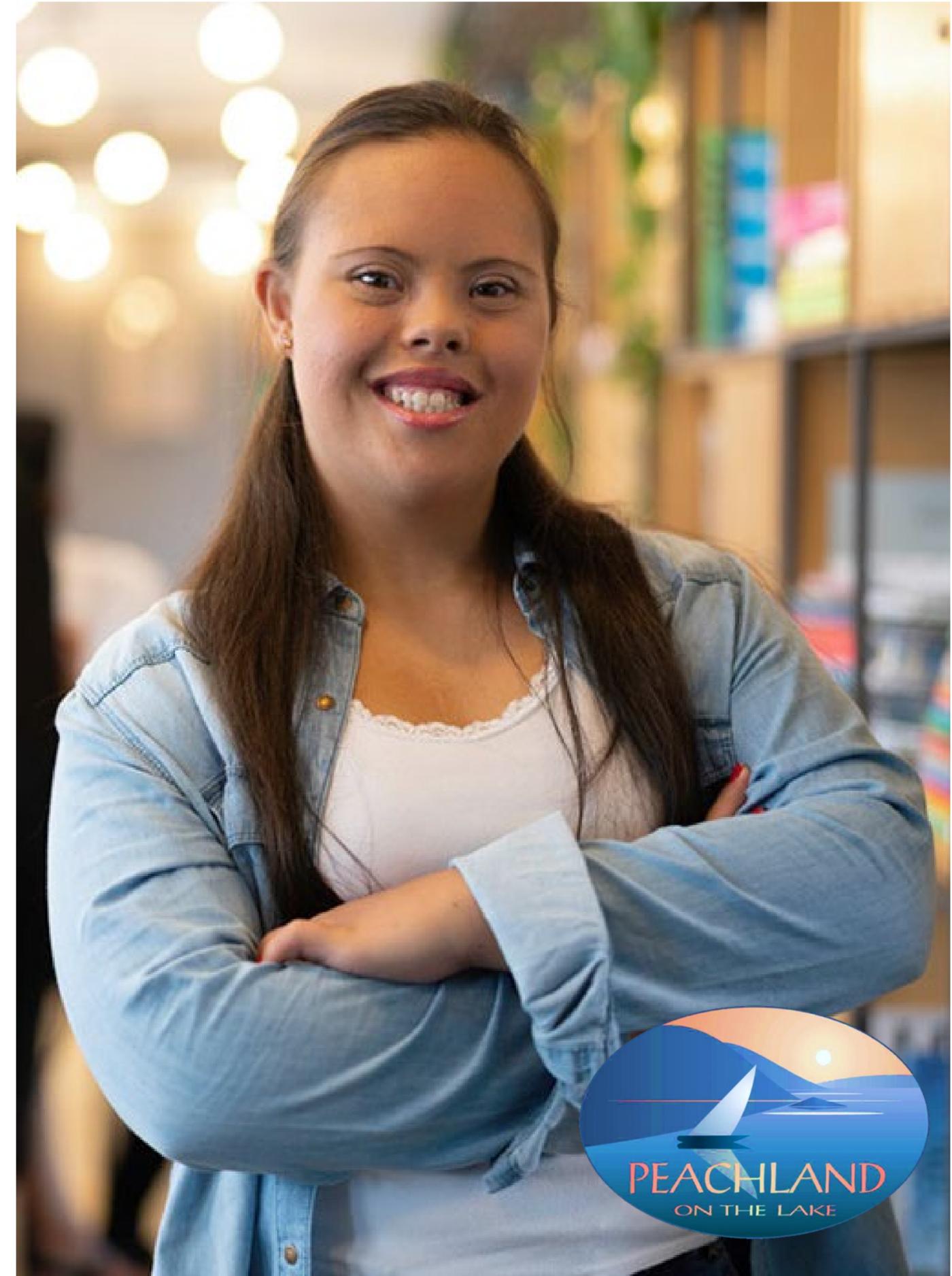
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Residents of Peachland want a more inclusive Community. People want accessible spaces, services and opportunities. This plan will improve Peachland's accessibility and inclusiveness.

Important feedback has been provided from various community members and groups including:

- Residents
- Service Providers
- Peachland Elementary School Students
- The District's Accessibility Advisory Committee
- The District's Internal Staff

The District follows accessibility legislation, including:

- *UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*
- *Canadian Human Rights Act*
- *Accessible Canada Act*
- *Accessible BC Act*
- *BC Human Rights Code*

This plan is intended to:

- Educate District Staff on how people with disabilities experience Peachland.
- Ensure people with disabilities feel included in Peachland life and public matters.
- Make District policies and services accessible.

The District is thankful to all community partners, residents, and colleagues who took part in developing this plan in order to make Peachland better for all.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The District of Peachland Accessibility Plan is about including persons with disabilities in Peachland.

We can do this by having:

- Inclusive and accessible services.
- Accessible programs, buildings, and public spaces.
- Ways to get rid of barriers that stop people from taking part in Peachland life.

The District uses the term “persons with disabilities” to include:

- People who experience physical, mental health, cognitive, communication, intellectual, sensory, or age-related impairments.
- People who lived experience of mental health challenges or substance-use related disabilities.

This Accessibility Plan gives:

- Definitions and accessibility commitments.
- Focus for improving accessibility within the District and the community.
- A starting point for change that must happen over time.
- An accessibility lens for District planning.
- Ways to track accessibility in District policies and services.
- Feedback on work and action plans.

This Plan supports inclusion of persons with disabilities in our community. Everyone is likely to experience a temporary, periodic, or permanent disability at some point in life. Persons with disabilities need to be seen, heard, engaged, recognized and valued in our community.



# OVERVIEW OF ACCESSIBILITY AND PEACHLAND

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

There is not a lot of data regarding the range of experience with disabilities of people in Peachland.

The most up to date data source is the Canadian Survey on Disability (2017). It is done the year after each federal census. This survey only includes people 15 and older who reported having limitations on their daily activities in the census.

The following is an overview of the numbers of people in the Kelowna region currently living with disabilities:

- 36,350 persons (age 15 and older) with disabilities in the Kelowna geographical area which represents 23.8% of the total population of the area. People experience disabilities in many categories.

## ACCESSIBILITY RESULTS

Persons with disabilities are diverse in their disabilities, gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, nationality, immigration status, and more. Identities intersect with each other. A goal of the Accessibility Strategy's is to be more aware of intersectional identities for better accessibility. More engagement with community members with disabilities is needed to get better intersectional data.

The Canadian Survey on Disability includes data on demographics, employment and income of people with disabilities. Some statistics (2017 Stats) include:

- One in five (22%) of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over – or about 6.2 million individuals had one or more disability.
- Women are more likely to have a disability than men.
- Disabilities related to pain, flexibility, mobility, and mental health were the most common disability types.
- Among youth, mental health-related disabilities were the most prevalent type of disability.
- Among those aged 25 to 64 years, persons with disabilities were less likely to be employed (59%) than those without disabilities (80%).
- As the level of severity increased, the likelihood of being employed decreased. Among individuals aged 25 to 64 years, 76% of those with mild disabilities were employed, whereas 31% of those with very severe disabilities were employed.
- Among those with disabilities aged 25 to 64 years who were not employed and not currently in school, two in five (39%) had potential to work. This represents nearly 645,000 individuals with disabilities.
- Persons with more severe disabilities (28%) aged 25 to 64 years were more likely to be living in poverty (as measured by the Market Basket Measure) than their counterparts without disabilities (10%) or with milder disabilities (14%).
- Among those with disabilities aged 15 to 64 years, lone parents and those living alone were the most likely to be living in poverty among any type of household living arrangements. Since eight in ten lone parents were women, the high risk of living in poverty in this group disproportionately affected women.

# GAINING PERSPECTIVE ON ACCESSIBILITY

An accessible community benefits everyone. When we focus on those who experience the most need, we all benefit.

This work is about changing culture of the District by:

- Removing barriers that are part of our systems;
- Focusing on education;
- Having more accessible services for different people;
- Making a welcoming community and workplace of persons with disabilities.

Everyone has a role to play in challenging biases and stereotypes about persons with disabilities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Accessibility Plan benefits from ongoing community engagement from diverse voices of persons with disabilities.

This engagement involves:

- Collaborating with disability organizations to inform the District of the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Inviting citizens to participate in the development and implementation of the plan.
- Surveying the community to help identify barriers.





# DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES

## DEFINITIONS

The terms disability and accessibility are always changing. Definitions change when society changes.

The term disability is complex. Some people identify with the term disability, and some do not. The reason some people do not is because of negative stereotypes about disability. Others find identity and community using the term.

The term accessibility is complex. One definition used is “the absence of barriers that prevent individuals and/or groups from participating, contributing and benefiting in all aspects of society.” Accessibility means different things to different people. People do not have to be from the disability community to experience inaccessibility. For the purposes of this Strategy, we mean accessibility for persons with disabilities.

## PRINCIPLES

The principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design are all included within the Accessibility plan and are defined below.

**Inclusion** - All people must be able to take part in the community with individual autonomy and choice.

**Adaptability** - We will be flexible as accessibility services, technology, and attitudes change.

**Diversity** - All people are respected for their differences and lived experiences including disabilities/abilities, age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, and immigration status.

**Collaboration** - Working with all stakeholders to end barriers and build an accessible community.

**Self Determination** – District services will aim to promote individual’s right and capacity for self-determination.

**Universal Design** – Design processes will aim to make District services, environments and buildings accessible and usable by all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors.

# GOALS, KEY FOCUS AREAS AND ACTION PLANS

## GOALS

The goals of the Accessibility Plan are to:

1. Ensure that all residents have fair access to the District's services, programs, and infrastructure.
2. Build an inclusive culture within the District.
3. Support all District departments to use an accessibility lens in daily activities.
4. Remove barriers to recruitment, hiring, retention, accommodation, and advancement of employees with disabilities.

We want to:

- Respect the rights, dignity, and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Create a culture where all people feel valued, respected, and welcomed.
- Give fair access for people to take part in the planning of municipal policies, programs and services.
- Foster inclusion for all District residents, visitors, and employees.
- Be sure the District uses an accessibility lens in the daily operations of each department.
- Value and use the knowledge and views of persons with disabilities.
- Understand barriers to inclusion may increase with intersecting identities.
- Align the District's plan with both federal and provincial accessibility legislation.

## KEY FOCUS AREAS AND ACTION PLANS

Six areas of focus for goals of the District's Accessibility Plan have been identified and include:

1. Built Environment and Public Spaces
2. Transportation Services, Policies and Programs
3. Housing Services, Programs and Design
4. Information and Communication Services
5. Employment
6. Advocacy And Working With Other Orders Of Government Along With Other Agencies



# FOCUS AREAS & ACTIONS

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Improve the District’s facilities, services, parks and public spaces for persons with disabilities.

TIMELINE	OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS
	<p>Accessibility Standards and Guidelines</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create an inventory of District Facilities requiring upgrading.</li> <li>2. Use universal design guidelines for District-owned facilities.</li> <li>3. Adopt and implement the BC Building Code and accessibility standards in all new construction and renovations.</li> <li>4. Ensure that public buildings, parks, sidewalks and transportation systems comply with accessibility guidelines, including ramps, handrails, accessible parking spaces and signage.</li> <li>5. Enhance accessibility in parks and recreational areas by providing accessible trails, picnic areas, and inclusive playgrounds.</li> </ol>
	<p>District policies and standards meet the accessibility standards outlined in the Accessible BC Act.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make an accessible version of the “Zoning and Development Bylaw” in a format that meets web content guidelines.</li> </ol>
	<p>Include consultation with accessibility experts and persons with disabilities in all new District facility construction and public space plans.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider the accessibility certification steps necessary for District owned buildings to meet certification criteria under Provincial Statute. (BC Building Code Accessibility Standards)</li> </ol>
	<p>Support builders and businesses to make accessible spaces in all District infrastructure</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make changes to District-owned buildings to meet current accessibility standards.</li> <li>2. Work with local businesses to encourage them to improve accessibility in their premises, such as providing accessible entrances, widened doorways, and accessible washrooms.</li> </ol>

# FOCUS AREAS & ACTIONS

## TRANSPORTATION

Connect people to their daily needs regardless of their abilities.

TIMELINE	OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS
	Implement universal design principles that guide transportation planning and design.	1. Create an inventory of District facilities requiring upgrading.
	Improve Accessibility to Transportation.	1. Collaborate with transit providers to improve accessibility on public transportation, including buses, taxis, and ride-sharing services.
	Better pedestrian experiences for persons with disabilities and seniors.	1. Make upgrades to sidewalks and pathways to cut barriers to walking and using mobility devices. 2. Upgrade bus stops for universal accessibility. Including having seating and outdoor shelter, more landing pads for ramps and mobility devices. 3. Ensure there is seating for people who need rest breaks along sidewalks and other pedestrian paths. 4. Crosswalk Upgrades in the Downtown area. (audible signals, etc.)
	Update parking standards around the District for better accessibility for persons with disabilities.	1. Parking Bylaws updated for accessible parking and new buildings. Including the introduction of van-accessible parking spaces and better accessible parking spaces. 2. Have enough accessible parking in all areas to meet the needs of current and future population.

# FOCUS AREAS & ACTIONS

## HOUSING

Accessible, affordable, social and supportive housing is available for persons with disabilities.

TIMELINE	OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS
	Advocate the Province and Federal governments for more income assistance and for more rental supplements for persons with disabilities.	1. Work with BC Housing, non-profits, and persons with disabilities to explore how to increase the number of accessible units provided within new social and supportive housing projects and how to prioritize those units for people with disabilities.
	Work with the disability community on making accessible units and public housing for those with most need.	1. Work across departments and with the disability community to identify the most impactful actions for advocacy to Provincial and Federal levels of government and prioritize these in the District's housing advocacy work.
	Work with Developers to encourage accessibility is built into all housing options.	1. Consider Design Guidelines to encourage accessibility.

# FOCUS AREAS & ACTIONS

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Offer accessible communication formats and communication supports.

TIMELINE	OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS
	Use District communications to raise awareness about disabilities and why accessibility is important.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reach people with limited access to the District. Use offline media like posters, letters, phone calls, community groups, etc.</li> <li>2. Ensure the District’s website is accessible to the biggest possible audience.</li> <li>3. Identify and promote Funding Opportunities to make existing homes more accessible so that people can stay in their homes.</li> </ol>
	Ensure meetings and events are accessible to all people.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure events plan for accessibility challenges such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility – accessible parking, ramps, elevators, entries, corridors, washrooms, assistance dog provisions, etc.</li> <li>• Sensitivities – ventilation, lighting, surfaces, external noise and acoustics, food and beverage allergens, timing of event, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Try using multilingual closed captioning for Council meetings.</li> </ol>
	Have accessible communications standards.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use plain language in all Civic Engagement and Communications including print, digital, and social content.</li> <li>2. Use accessible principles, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative text for any visual social/digital content and captioning for audio.</li> <li>• Plain language for information bulletins, news releases and websites.</li> <li>• Install assistive devices, closed captioning, and other accessibility features in public venues, such as the community hall and Council chambers.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
	Make wayfinding systems better so they meet the needs of persons with disabilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve wayfinding signage (Accessibly signed)</li> </ol>

# FOCUS AREAS & ACTIONS

## EMPLOYMENT

An inclusive and accessible workplace for all in the District of Peachland including more ways for persons with disabilities to contribute to the workforce.

TIMELINE	OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS
	Put in place regular equity-focused staff training.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Make resources and tools for staff to grow their knowledge and understanding of accessibility issues within the workplace.</li><li>2. Grow learning around Justice, Equity, Decolonization, and Inclusion.</li><li>3. Education and training for senior decision makers.</li></ol>
	Update the District's job recruitment and hiring practices for better accessibility.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Check the District's medical accommodations process to ensure the District's duty to accommodate information is known and available.</li><li>2. Review job postings for employment equity and accessibility.</li></ol>
	Ensure all staff who hire or supervise others have a strong knowledge of workplace accommodations to help support employees with disabilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Make sure the District's recruitment system is fair.</li><li>2. Define the accommodation process for District Staff.</li></ol>

# FOCUS AREAS & ACTIONS

## GOVERNANCE AND SERVICES

Ensure fair access to municipal programs and services in the District of Peachland.

TIMELINE	OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS
	Ensure that people with disabilities are involved in the development of standards to embed accessibility in the District.	1. Make accommodation plans for connecting with residents outside of events.
	Develop customer services standards training for staff that includes how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.	1. Develop training for staff 2. Make an online listing of accessible services and supports for persons with disabilities.
	Incorporate accessibility criteria and features when acquiring or purchasing goods, services or facilities.	
	Develop accessibility policies across District Services.	1. Develop policies

# FOCUS AREAS & ACTIONS

## ADVOCACY AND WORKING WITH OTHER ORDERS OF GOVERNMENT, ALONG WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Work with all levels of government to ensure persons with disabilities can move, lead, and take part in their communities.

TIMELINE	OBJECTIVES	ACTION ITEMS
	Include everyone in making accessibility and inclusion better within the District.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ensure the District's Accessibility Plan aligns with the Accessible British Columbia Act.</li><li>2. Ensure all District Staff are familiar with the Accessibility Plan.</li></ol>
	Sharing gained knowledge with community partners and other levels of government.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Work with Community groups to encourage using a disability lens in their operations.</li></ol>
	Advocate for the disability community to work with other levels of government.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Advocate with community partners for better access to early learning and childcare funding services for children with disabilities.</li></ol>

# ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

Monitoring the progress of the Action Plan and reporting the progress made will be necessary to the success of the plan. This will be done by using action plans and timelines.

## **ACTION PLANS**

District staff will work with the Accessibility Committee to accomplish the goals of the Accessibility plan. Every department is responsible for ensuring the objectives of the plan are being met by developing and implementing action plans.

District staff will track department actions and report to Council on the progress of the actions identified within the plan on an annual basis.

## **TIMELINES**

The Accountability Framework includes three timelines as follows:

### **Five Year Assessment**

A long-term review. Tracking how the accessibility actions we take will help health outcomes of people in the community.

### **Three Year Action Plans**

Departments will update their action plans every three years.

### **Annual Reporting**

Administration will provide a report to Council on an annual basis on the progress of the actions identified within the plan.



## CONCLUSION

This Accessibility Plan serves as a roadmap to enhance accessibility and promote inclusivity in the community. By implementing the strategies outlined in this plan, Peachland can create an environment that respects the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities, enabling them to participate fully in all aspects of community life.

