















*21. Staff will bring the patio bylaw updates back to the Committee within the next couple of months as it will be going to Council at the end of March*

## **F.7**

L. Bartram requested that floating bus stops be added to the action log. She noted that the installation of flashing amber lights at floating bus stops has been added to Provincial Active Transportation Design Guidelines despite the fact that this mitigation has not been proven effective or been requested by persons who are blind. TransLink and CNIB are conducting studies and a review of this and other existing guidelines for inclusive (floating) bus stops next to bike lanes in the next six months.





# Accessible Meeting and Event Tool Kit

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# Introduction

In August 2020, City Council adopted the 2020 Accessibility Framework and Accessibility Policy. The Framework's Short-Term Action Plan identifies the need to refine meeting/event guidelines and processes to improve accessibility.

A key objective of the Accessibility Framework is to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in Council decision-making processes, City engagement activities and City-led special events and/or ceremonies.

People with disabilities can face multiple barriers preventing full participation in local government activities, including accessing services, information, events, discussions and engagements.

The Accessible Meeting and Event Tool Kit is designed to assist City staff in planning and conducting accessible meetings, special events and engagement activities to ensure they are inclusive to all community members.

Events may be virtual or in-person such as open houses, workshops, dialogues, pop-ups, committee meetings, ceremonies, opening/launches and celebrations.

## City's Commitment to Accessibility

The City of Victoria is committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers across its services, programs and infrastructure in order to benefit the community in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

The City of Victoria values the contributions from all people and believes diversity strengthens the community. The City recognizes the essential knowledge and perspectives of people with lived experience of disability and commits to making sure those voices are part of community planning.

The City of Victoria will ensure staff and Council are aware of their roles in influencing accessibility for people with disabilities and accept their responsibility to support positive community attitudes.

## Key Principles

The City has adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) core principles that underpin the rights of people with disabilities in combination with the emerging provincial principles on accessibility, as follows:

**Inclusion:** All people should be able to participate fully in our community with dignity and individual autonomy.

**Diversity:** All people will be respected for their differences and lived experiences, regardless of ability, age, gender identity and expression, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, place of origin and religion.

**Respect:** All people should be treated with respect so that they can make their own choices, contribute to civil society and thrive through independence.

**Collaboration:** While the City does provide a leadership role, the City cannot address accessibility alone. We must collaborate with other stakeholders, levels of government, agency partners, advocacy organizations and service providers to eliminate barriers and support innovations towards an accessible society.

**Adaptability:** Disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology and attitudes change.

## Understanding Disabilities in Victoria

In Victoria, it is estimated that approximately 21 per cent of the population (about 19,000 people) have one or more disabilities. This means approximately one in five Victorians experience at least one disability. An estimated one in 10 Victorians over the age of 15 have severe or very severe disabilities.

People with disabilities deserve the opportunity to be actively involved in local government decision-making processes. Inclusion enables participation by all, ensuring all voices are part of shaping a sustainable, healthy and vibrant community.

### Types of Disabilities

Disability groupings are used to help provide a broad understanding of experiences that may be shared or related to a disability, in terms of underlying health conditions, activity limitations, participation restrictions and environmental factors.

Encountered at any age, disabilities can be temporary or long term. While there is no universally adopted set of disability groupings, it is important to recognize several common types and causes of disability.

Some disabilities are visible while others are not immediately visible to others, such as asthma, brain injuries or concussions, allergies or environmental sensitivities, extreme fatigue or chronic pain. The following definitions are adapted from the World Health Organization (WHO) to help build awareness but should not be interpreted as a complete list.

**Pain:** Pain-related disabilities often refer to long-term or complex pain that may be caused by injury and may commonly occur with other disabilities.

**Flexibility, Mobility and Dexterity:** Disabilities related to mobility, flexibility and dexterity include limb disabilities, manual dexterity, coordination, brain injuries and spinal-cord function.

**Mental Health:** Mental health-related disabilities refer to conditions that affect the mind and brain and the way a person thinks, feels and acts.

**Learning and Memory:** Learning and memory disabilities include challenges related to skills such as reading, writing, and problem solving. They can also interfere with more complex and abstract skills related to the ability to organize, to reason, long and short-term memory and attention span.

**Visual Disabilities:** Visual disabilities can range from partial sight loss to complete blindness.

**Hearing:** Hearing disabilities can range from partial hearing loss to complete deafness.

**Developmental:** Developmental disabilities are a diverse group of conditions resulting from physical or mental challenges that arise before adulthood. These conditions may create difficulties with language, mobility, learning and independent living.

**Other:** There are many other types of disabilities that may affect how a person lives their day-to-day life.

# Planning a Virtual Meeting or Event

Virtual meetings and events can improve access to City engagement opportunities.

Accessibility starts *before* your meeting or event.

- 1) **Virtual Platform** – The City of Victoria uses Microsoft Teams for its virtual meetings and IT staff support this technology, which is used for internal and external meetings and engagement events. Meeting participants do not need to download the app and can access Teams using their web browser.

Participants should be provided the option to use their video or just their audio, or to dial-in via a conference phone number.

**Note:** At times, City staff may be asked by community partners to work with Zoom rather than Microsoft Teams. Zoom can be used, however, IT is unable to provide technical support.

- 2) **Live Captions** – Microsoft Teams can detect what is being said in a meeting and present live captions, as well as attribute the captions to a speaker. Currently, live captions are only available in English.

To turn on/off live captions, go to the meeting's More Options (...) and turn on or off live captions. Live captions work best when there is minimal background noise, people speak clearly and slowly, and avoid having multiple people speak at the same time. Obscenities will be starred out. Captions may be less accurate for speakers who have an accent. [Learn more](#).

- 3) **Accommodations** – Some accessibility accommodations for virtual meetings/events that may be requested by persons with disabilities include American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, closed captioning, and receiving PowerPoint slides, accessible files and videos in advance.

- 4) **Include Request for Accommodation in Meeting Invitation** – When sending your virtual meeting invite, include a statement letting people know that they can request accessibility accommodations such as an ASL interpreter and that closed captioning will be available in the Teams meeting. The statement could read as, “To request an accessibility accommodation, please contact xxxx.” Make sure this information is located close to the top of your email or print invitation and includes the contact person’s name, phone number and email address.

- 5) **Moderator** – Designate a moderator who will provide structure to the meeting, identify speakers and ensure all participants have an opportunity to speak.

Make sure that your moderator announces the accessibility features at the beginning of your meeting or event to let them know, for example, that ASL interpreters or documents in accessible formats are available.

All speakers should read slide titles and describe the image or content that makes up a photo, graph or chart.

- 6) **Chat Box** – Monitor the chat box and read aloud any questions or comments that need to be addressed. The chat box is an alternate method for people to communicate. Others may raise “virtual hands”.

Please note that the chat box can be problematic for some screen reader users. The screen reader will speak everything in the chat box which may interfere with hearing the live speaker. This feature should ONLY be used for participants to communicate directly with the moderator. Important information should not be shared in the chat box unless it is also made available through other means.

- 7) **Speaker Identification** – For large virtual meetings or events, ask participants to identify themselves when they speak. All guest presenters should be easily visible to help those who read lips. Make sure guest presenters have their video turned on, don't cover their mouth when speaking and are well lit. Also, guest presenters should always ask attendees if they are speaking loud enough, or if they are speaking too fast.
- 8) **Inclusive Welcome** – Remember to welcome participants using gender-neutral terms, such as “everyone” or “folks”, instead of “ladies and gentlemen” or “guys”.
- 9) **Accessible Emails** – Your emails can be made accessible by using **16-point font and sans-serif text such as Arial**, and present the content as html text, bold or hyperlink important information.

Images in an email are to be made accessible by using the alternative text description. In your email, select the image, then click on “Format” and “Picture Layout”. Then select “Layout and Properties”. Next select “Alt Text”. Then type in text to describe the image, including a title. If the image contains text, you can repeat these steps and include the text in the image description. [Watch this video to learn how to make an image accessible in your email.](#)

- 10) **Presentation Materials** – If possible, make slides and videos available in advance to allow participants to have more control to magnify and view them, rather than try and do this in a large group setting. People with vision impairments using a screen reader can't see a shared screen or video, which is why it's important to make slides and videos available ahead of the meeting or event or make them available in the chat.
- 11) **Accessible Files** – The City is moving towards making its signature publications, documents and fillable forms accessible on its website. This means a screen reader is able to “read out” the information in the file. Files with graphs, tables and graphic layout are not easily accessible. For this reason, you will need to have simple Word files available for screen readers to access online. [Watch this video to learn more on how to make your Word files accessible.](#)
- 12) **Be Descriptive** – When presenting, rather than say “in the upper right corner”, be descriptive of what you are explaining to those who may have visual disabilities.
- 13) **Chat Links** – Read aloud links that are posted in the chat box of a virtual meeting. Those with assistive technology may not be able to activate or copy the links.
- 14) **Breakout Rooms** – If your virtual event will use breakout rooms, you will need to say aloud how long each breakout session will last. If someone has requested an ASL interpreter or live captioning, ensure that service follows them to their breakout room.  
  
**Note:** Budget and plan accordingly as you may require more than one ASL interpreter.
- 15) **Feedback/Survey Form** – Ensure that your feedback form is accessible to screen readers.
- 16) **Recording a Teams meeting/event** – If you plan to record a Teams meeting or event, you will need to state this at the beginning of your session – and in advance in your promotional materials and messaging.

## Accommodations for Virtual Meetings and Events

### ASL (American Sign Language) Interpreters

ASL interpreters work in two-person teams if the meeting or event is more than 75 minutes in length. Both interpreters will be actively engaged in the process of interpreting. You will need to book and budget for two ASL interpreters. Additional ASL interpreters may be required for breakout rooms.

Please provide two weeks' notice when booking an ASL interpreter. Regular monthly meetings can also be accommodated with advance notice.

Also, if there is an opportunity for your meeting/event to start on the quarter hour (e.g., 8:45 a.m. versus 9 a.m. or 10:15 a.m. versus 10:30 a.m.) that is helpful. ASL interpreters work back-to-back meetings, so having 15 minutes between assignments can sometimes be imperative to getting assignments filled.

Submit any presentation materials (e.g., the meeting link, agenda, slides, land acknowledgement, speaking notes, program, etc.) in advance. This will allow the interpreter(s) to prepare putting the material into American Sign Language.

### Island Deaf Hard of Hearing Interpreting and Captioning Services

130 – 1555 McKenzie Avenue, Victoria BC, V8N 1A4

Contact: Kristi or Nina

Voice: 250.592.8144

Text: 250.818.0479

Email: [interpreting@idhhc.ca](mailto:interpreting@idhhc.ca)

<https://idhhc.ca/>

### Rates:

ASL interpreting service rates for one interpreter:

One-hour booking – \$136.50

Two-hour booking – \$166.75

Additional hours at \$75.75/hour

Please inquire about half-day (four hours) and full-day (eight hours) rates.

**Note:** There is a two-business day cancellation policy, otherwise payment in full is invoiced.













































