

Independent Community Meeting Report Back



Preparing Your Report Back



In keeping with the broader community meetings, all of the notes and feedback from your independent community meeting will become part of the broader consultation process.

As part of your report back, you might want to share more about the experiences of the participants in your meetings and the diversity of insights that they were able to offer. You might also want to include individual stories or case study examples based on the discussions in your group. However, as you prepare your report back, it is important to ensure that individual privacy and confidentiality is respected.

This reporting template has been developed to help provide guidance around summarizing the feedback from your independent community meeting. However, please remember it represents only one possible approach. Please feel free to prepare and submit summary notes in whatever format works best for your group or community.

How to Submit Your Report

Your completed reports should be forwarded electronically to SPARC BC at the following email address: accessibility@sparc.bc.ca

You can also mail your written submission to SPARC BC at:

SPARC BC

4445 Norfolk Street

Burnaby, BC V5G 0A7

All submissions must be received by **November 29, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.**

Privacy Statement

Your comments and feedback will be collected by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction under sections 26(c) and 26(e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (“FOIPPA”), for the purpose of soliciting the public’s feedback on the development of accessibility legislation for B.C. To protect your own privacy and the privacy of others, please do not include any personal information including phone numbers and email addresses in the body of your submission. Should you have any questions about the collection of this information please contact SPARC BC.

Other Questions?

Should you require assistance or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

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ABOUT YOUR MEETING

About Your Independent Community Meeting

? Our independent community meeting was organized by the following organization(s):

Town of Gibsons, David Croal, Councillor, made the application and facilitated the meeting

? How many individuals participated in your meeting?

We only had eight people attend the meeting but I have done follow-up individual sessions, with people I personally know who have accessibility issues. This would bring our survey information to twelve participants.

? Where did you hold your meeting (which community)?

We held the meeting at the Community Recreation Centre, in Gibsons, on the Sunshine Coast. 700 Park Road. We met on the traditional territory of the Skwxwu7mesh Uxwunixw (Squamish Nation)

Tell us a bit about your meeting (i.e. provide a general overview of the social and demographic profile of participants including the disability group(s) represented).

A huge lesson was learned here. Individuals with any form of accessibility are isolated once darkness falls, in our community and on the entire Sunshine Coast from the information I gleaned attending the session at the Sea Side Centre in Sechelt.

When we received approval for our meeting and the deadline by which the results had to be filed we were in a bit of a squeeze play. With the

29th of November deadline, our meeting was scheduled for the 21st of November from 6:30-8:30 pm. Huge mistake people with accessibility issues cannot get out at night.

I had reached out to Handy Dart, in order to organize transportation for potential attendees only to discover the Handy Dart, in our community does not work at night. However those who participated provided a good range of views.

**KEY THEMES OR
TOPICS DISCUSSED**

Key Themes or Points of Discussion



Please indicate if you used the sample Agenda provided in the toolkit and/or whether you used a different approach for your meeting.

- Yes, we used the sample Agenda provided including the list of suggested topics and themes
 - No, we preferred to work directly from the British Columbia Framework for Accessibility Legislation developed by the Province
 - No, we adapted the Agenda to meet the specific needs of our participants
 - Other
-

The following were the key themes or topics we discussed:

Because of the size of our group we placed several tables together and created a round table where we were all facing once and other

- A round of introductions was done with a brief outline of why each individual was attending.
- We then followed the guideline outline and discussed individual topics
- I will highlight information that was included that did not fall exactly into the guide line template.
- Enforcement of bylaws with respect handicap parking too often people abuse this parking and get away with it.
- Mobility impacts on lifespan, lack of mobility affects health and reduces lifespan.
- Towns and cities need to become livable for everyone
- Creation of general awareness
- Design of public engagement -- -often people in wheel chairs are

excluded because they are actually overlooked

- We are living in an aging infrastructure in which there was a lack of consideration for those with accessibility issues
- Issues with home care
- Hidden mobility issues, low tolerance, to distance, noise, bright light.
- People with learning disabilities being isolated and excluded
- Parents with small children and problems with strollers
- Access to shops --- shelving not accessible or isles too narrow for access lack of staff for assistance
- Social pressure to push people beyond their capability
- Building design for potential built in for access accommodation eliminating the need for future costly renovation

**REPORT BACK BASED ON
THE SAMPLE AGENDA**

Sample Agenda

AGENDA Community Meetings

Purpose of the meeting

- Begin a conversation about accessibility in British Columbia
- Get ideas about what accessibility legislation in B.C. could look like
- Develop legislation, standards and policies that support people with disabilities to live with dignity and to meaningfully participate in their community
- Build on and complement the new Federal Accessibility legislation
- Learn from the experiences of other Provinces who already have legislation in place as well as the lived experience of persons with disabilities in B.C.
- Share thoughts and test ideas about proposed standards and implementation details
- Learn more about what is important to British Columbians with disabilities in order to create the legislation and tools that are needed to make a meaningful difference

2:30	Call the Meeting to Order
2:30 to 2:45	Welcome, Introductions and Territorial Acknowledgement
2:45 to 3:15	Topic 1: Accessibility Through Legislation—What’s Important to You
3:15 to 3:30	Topic 2: The Proposed Approach: Scope, Definition, Purpose and Principles
3:30 to 4:00	Topic 3: Accessibility Standards—Areas of Focus
4:00 to 4:15	Topic 4: Implementation Details: Incentives, Compliance and Enforcement
4:15 to 4:30	Topic 5: Culture Change—Looking Beyond the Legislation
4:30 to 5:00	Wrap-Up and Report Back—Top three 3 insights or ideas to share from the day

TOPIC 1

Initial Reflections

What's Important to You

Topic 1: What's important to you?

Meeting participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- 1. Please describe your experience with accessibility and inclusion.*
- 2. Thinking about your personal experiences, what is most important to you about accessibility and inclusion in B.C.?*
- 3. If there is one thing you hope the accessibility legislation will accomplish what would it be?*

Participants shared the following feedback/insights:

Issues of Importance as outlined by those who attended:

- Being able to move freely, not being constantly faced with walls and closed doors.
- Having access to the help and care I need.
- Accessibility to services
- Available information in layman's terms and easily accessed.
- This help includes being able to access information on an individual level
- A Barrier free B.C.
- Creating a level of awareness within those who don't have issues so individuals with issues are stigmatized
- Walk in my shoes – those making the legislation should be those with accessibility issues – i.e. the guy who designed my stove never has to clean it!
- Age should not be a barrier.
- Income has become a huge barrier to many and has created isolation
- PWD pensions need to be reviewed.
- Don't assume people can write, make assistance accessible to all

The most obvious comments from those individuals who have mobility issues, with respect to our community are the issues with geography. The town is split into an upper and lower village – the Lower village is the historic community, with tourist attractions, restaurants, galleries, the public market and access to the harbor and marina.

The upper village is more the service providers, Medical clinic, grocery stores, pharmacy, gas stations, the mall and a strip mall.

Transportation for any individuals with mobility issues is difficult, there is limited accessible parking. And even within the lower village it too is split with two main streets with extreme grades between them.

From the individuals with mobility issues

- Public transit – the seats are too low and often occupied by people reluctant to move.
- There is a lack of parking
- Lack of awareness of the mobile public towards our limitations
- This also includes a lack of awareness towards the elderly
- Let down ramps at corners are often too narrow or only on the diagonal so you are trust into oncoming traffic.
- Building design and design short comings, design over accessibility, design over comfort of those using, bad acoustics, bad lighting, that creates a harsh environment for some.

TOPIC 2

Proposed Approach, Scope,
Definitions, Purpose and Principles

Topic 2: Proposed Approach

Meeting participants reviewed the proposed model for legislation as set out in the Framework document on page 16:

The Government of British Columbia envisions a broad alignment between federal and provincial accessibility legislation. It may provide people with disabilities, businesses and members of the community greater clarity about how the legislation works and what to expect. This would entail moving forward with enabling legislation that outlines objectives regarding accessibility and inclusion in British Columbia. The legislation would then provide the authority and tools necessary to achieve those objectives. Subsequently, accessibility standards and regulations would be developed in conjunction with persons with disabilities, experts and other stakeholders.

Participants shared the following feedback/insights:

All the legislation with respect to accessibility needs to align, currently the UN Definition seems to be the most encompassing. It is important that it is a level playing field across the province, between provinces, and across this country. Consistency is critical with the legislation that is draw up.

It is important to include those with hidden accessibility issues.

Ensure that the legislation allows for the needs of individuals in light of things like climate change legislation. i.e. Bike lanes have eliminated access to many buildings, including buildings who house offices of specialists often needed by those with accessibility issues. It is great to think green with the cyclists while cutting off access to others.

Distance is a barrier – often the distance between parking and building

entrance is a huge barrier – include rest stops along the way benches etc. that are of a height that they are useable.

ie classic in the building where we held our meeting – it is a community center --- all the sports related service are close to the entrance – ice rink, gum, racquet ball courts, squash courts. The meeting rooms are at the opposite end of the building. Yet these rooms are the ones most used by those with mobility issues. (Bad Design)

Public education has to be included with the legislation process.

- The example cited above is classic – a building being designed without thought of the users – I guess in this case it was who uses it most, make it convenient for them and disregard the accessibility of others
- New buildings and those applying for permits to renovate, need to be viewed though the lens of accessibility. Not just mobility but also environmental, ie lighting and acoustics.

It is important to have this legislation, but with it there needs to be the support to back it up. The legislation is useless if there are not the resources to enact it.

- Funding to communities may be needed to provide infrastructure changes to accommodate mobility issues
- Human resources to deal with individuals
-

Accommodation design needs to be designed with accessibility built in not added as an afterthought, which creates a stigma.

Scope and Definitions

Meeting participants reviewed the proposed scope and definitions as set out in the Framework document on pages 16 & 17:

The Government of British Columbia is committed to accessibility legislation that is inclusive of all persons with disabilities and would support the adoption of a broad and inclusive definition of “disability” consistent with the U.N.C.R.P.D. and the Accessible Canada Act.

Participants shared the following feedback/insights:

This was brought up earlier -
All the legislation with respect to accessibility needs to align, currently the UN Definition seems to be the most encompassing. It is important that it is a level playing field across the province, between provinces, and across this country. Consistency is critical with the legislation that is draw up.
It is important to include those with hidden accessibility issues. Mental as well as physical, and economic.
This legislation also needs to address homeless, for the lack of an address is becoming a huge barrier to way too many, and often these people are people with accessibility and mobility issues.
Legislation is useless unless the financial commitment is made to enable it to be enacted.
This means additional funding to services that support those with accessibility issues.

The legislation needs to address how the legislation will engage with the system.

Humanity needs to be put back into the system

- The labyrinth of computer driven phone trees needs to be addressed.
- Push 1 for this then 3 for that – then 5 for this only to get to a recorded message that this office is only open Tuesday and Friday and the message box is full

Purposes

The Framework document on page 19 describes some of the different purposes that the accessibility legislation can achieve:

- **To support** Canada’s ratification of the U.N.C.R.P.D. by promoting, protecting, and ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and by promoting respect for their inherent dignity.
- **To identify**, remove and prevent barriers encountered by people with disabilities in their daily lives through the development, implementation, and enforcement of accessibility standards.
- **To allow** persons with disabilities and other impacted stakeholders in the public and private sectors to work collaboratively toward the timely development of accessibility standards.
- **To ensure** there are adequate mechanisms in place to track progress on accessibility.
- **To promote** compatibility with the Accessible Canada Act between federal and provincial accessibility standards.

Participants shared the following feedback/insights:

Much of the information that has previously been mentioned once again falls into this area

And would be ranked in importance as follows

1. Everyone present was pretty much of the feeling that the UN legislation to date offers the best definition, and should be the basis of any legislation moving forward. Ensure that legislation across the country is consistent.
2. It is critical for those with issues be involved in the drafting of the legislation - -- example given earlier of the guy who designs the stove doesn’t have to clean it.
3. Most were in agreement that To Identify and Ensure fall together

Principles

The Framework document on page 20 and 21 describes the different principles that can be used to guide the development of the accessibility legislation including:

- **Inclusion:** All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.
- **Adaptability:** Accessibility legislation should reflect that that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology and attitudes change. Ensuring B.C. is an inclusive and accessible province will require on-going commitment from government in partnership with the disability community and other stakeholders.
- **Diversity:** Every person is unique. Persons 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 principles of intersectionality and the diversity of the disability 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.

Participants shared the following feedback/insights:

These put the dots was tricky --- I know why you wanted it as such but when you are dealing with individuals who tend to be subjective rather than objective it's difficult

Inclusion came out on top, as it partially includes the UN definition.

Collaboration – critical for if everyone does not embrace the legislation and be prepared to pay for it – it is doomed from inception

Adaptability was the second ranking issue --

Diversity was the runner up although it should almost be included with adaptability

Self-Determination – was noted but information from earlier comments is given within this area --- empowering individuals to be able to have the self-esteem of being able to help themselves by making the system more user friendly and useable in a human way

TOPIC 3

Accessibility Standards— Key Areas of Focus

TOPIC 3: Standards—Key Areas of Focus

The Framework document (page 22) sets out some potential areas of focus in terms of the development of standards.

It notes that the standards that are developed would provide guidance about best practices for accessibility including desired outcomes. The specific areas within the framework document include:

- Service Delivery
- Employment
- The Built Environment
- Information and Communication
- Transportation

Participants were asked to reflect on these different areas and to share their experiences and insights around the types of changes or standards that are needed. Participants were also invited to share their ideas on any other potential areas for consideration.

The following reflects a summary of the feedback and insights shared:

Service Delivery:

The huge complaint around the room, and in conversation with others was the Humanity is gone out of the system.

- The system needs to be designed in a manner that is wrap around not defined by age.
- Individuals feel dehumanized by the system or challenged by the technology that is used to cost save within the system.
- People retreat from problem rather than fighting for care due to the current complexity for accessing help.
- There is no consistency with care givers and the system. **BRING BACK THE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE**
- Home care: This is a huge issue for many – incentives for tax credits or subsidies to provide below market rents to caregivers.

- Provision for people to be able to age in place by allowing garden suites or in home suites for caregivers.
- Dr. says do this but there is to access to it, left hand doesn't know what the right is doing.
- Huge issue with people aging out of the system --- they qualify for assistance to an age and then they are dumped to fend for themselves.
- The system needs to work in terms individuals can understand. Not by the book, written by lawyers, that few can understand.
- There is a tendency to just give up which least to compound problems and isolation
- Public education was felt to be important, this will lead to eliminating many of the barriers in the future as people will view life with the lens of accessibility, this will lead to better design, and models for inclusion.
- The ground zero infrastructure needs to be fortified, financially – the system has been eviscerated by previous governments. Leaving the care givers stretched beyond their limits, in turn building barriers for accessibility to essential services and compounding health issues.

Employment:

- Employers tend to look at profit and efficiency and are usually not willing to give those with accessibility issues a chance.
- An example – yes you qualify for the job but we do not have an accessible washroom.
- There needs to be provision and education to employers to illustrate that there can be benefits in hiring someone with a disability
- There needs to be stronger incentives for employers to hire a more diverse workforce
- The human need has to be embraced before the profit margin, and if this requires subsidies to the employer they should be available.
- Work environments need to be designed to accommodate all

The Physical/Built Environment:

- The relation between parking and entrances to building was a big issue

- Often in older buildings there is not automated doors or if they are there the controls for them are too far from the door and not often with proper signage
- Parking and accessible entrances are often in poor alignment
- Parkes are often designed with soft surfaces which make it difficult for wheeled mobility devices, wheel chairs, walkers, and families with small children, strollers
- Sidewalks are often cluttered with sandwich boards, fencing for outside cafés and other obstacles which makes mobility difficult for many.
- Design of infrastructure too often appearance outweighs function
- Wheel chair access was for non-mechanical wheel chairs, pre scooter, the design requirements for wash room access often does not allow for these larger foot print devices.
- Legislation needs to review Architectural Standards, which will reflect the needs of all – ie counters too high, limiting those in wheel chairs
- Design should reflect those who can't see – a universal standard of embedded codes in pavement, where possible audible announcements, gps announcements on public transit for example.

Information and Communication:

- Humanity needs to be put back into the system.
- Individuals become lost down the rabbit hole and labyrinth of some websites which is totally dehumanizing, leading to frustration and depression
- Information needs to be accessible to all not only those with disabilities, as often individuals wanting to be helpful, can't even find the information that would enable to assist their fellow man.
- Signage is important for if no other reason it offers a subliminal messaging to those without issue that there are those who need it. It is not a level playing field.

Transportation:

- Huge issue --- mentioned earlier bus seating is often too low or difficult to access
- Stricter enforcement of who requires seating -- often teens sit with earbuds texting and ignore those with needs
- Services available in the evening – often those with accessibility issues cannot participate in evening events as the transportation they require is not available.
- BC Ferries – the distance from drop off to ship is huge, assistance has to be booked 24 hours in advance, or may not be available. Elevators often don't work,
- Car deck parking for wheel chair access is difficult leaving people stranded in their cars and not even able to access washrooms
- A to B transit required. We were given an account of one of our participants who is in a wheel chair – took Handy Dart to therapy, only to discover that she bridged two zones. So was dropped off at the side of the road and told another Handy Dart would pick her up --- 45 minutes later the other Handy Dart arrived. That was the last time she was able to go for therapy

OTHER AREAS OF CONSIDERATION:

Service Delivery

Service delivery can include health services, customer service, education as well as other areas. The following reflects a summary of the feedback and insights shared by participants around potential improvements/standards in the area of service delivery:

Employment

Employment can include considerations related to the hiring and retention of persons with disabilities. The following reflects a summary of the feedback and insights shared by participants around potential improvements/standards in this area:

The Built Environment

The built environment can include considerations related to entranceways, parks, sidewalks, parking as well as other areas. The following reflects a summary of the feedback and insights shared by participants around potential improvements/standards needed for the built environment:

Information & Communication

Information and communication can include considerations related to websites, printed materials, emergency information as well as other areas. The following reflects a summary of the feedback and insights shared by participants around potential improvements/standards needed in the area of information and communication.

Transportation

Transportation can include considerations related to the way we get around our communities including travel by car, buses, ferries, taxis, scooters, wheelchairs, walkers and bicycles. The following reflects a summary of the feedback and insights shared by participants around potential improvements/standards in the area of transportation:

Other Considerations

There might be other considerations that you want to add to the list. The following reflects a summary of the feedback and insights shared by participants around potential improvements/standards needed in other areas:

TOPIC 4

Implementation Details

Measures to Ensure Compliance

TOPIC 4: Measures to Ensure Compliance

The Framework document (page 25) sets out different models for governance. As well, pages 27 to 31 in the Framework document describe different possible incentives or measures to help ensure compliance once the legislation is in place.

Participants were asked to look at the different measures or incentives and offer suggestions around the approach they feel would best ensure the types of outcomes needed. As well, participants were asked to rank the list of possible measures from those they consider to be most effective to those which they believe will be less effective including:

- Accessibility plans and progress reports,
- Information and resources to highlight leading practices adopted elsewhere,
- Recognition and awards for accessibility leaders or communities demonstrating exemplary practices,
- Funding programs and financial incentives to improve accessibility,
- Financial incentives for accessibility leaders,
- Requirements for accessibility plans and progress reports,
- New channels for feedback for employees, customers and members of the public,
- Community hubs offering resources, tools, training and support,
- Publications and information about known barriers to accessibility,
- Mandatory standards,
- Voluntary standards,
- Accessibility inspections,
- Mediation,
- Financial penalties for non-compliance,
- Legislative reviews and public reporting,
- Other.

The following reflects a summary of the feedback and insights shared around potential measures to ensure compliance

A standardized legislation is required, and as it is drafted engagement with those most affected it needed.

There should be broad engagement with other provinces, the federal government, the UN, and other countries that have developed successful guidelines, there is no sense reinventing the wheel.

Finance is going to be a huge component of this legislation – there is little sense drafting anything if the government/s are not going to support the infrastructure to enable it to succeed. Currently there are acute resources at ground level to support those with special needs.

This legislation needs to be something that everyone embraces. Few realize the thin line we walk between accessibility and isolation. Rick Hansen, is a good example, one day active, and the next in a wheel chair. One of our participants, one day an active care giver for others, now confined to a wheel chair, isolated and unable to get proper support.

People need to be aware that we are all vulnerable and this legislation is for the protection of everyone. However everyone needs to embrace it and be prepared to help fund the system

Education is critical --- the easiest way is to start young, awareness from a young age will eventually permeate society.

TOPIC 5

Creating Cultural Change

TOPIC 5: Looking Beyond Legislation

There are more than 926,100 British Columbians over the age of 15 with some form of disability. This represents 24.7% of the population. As the population ages, the number of people with disabilities and the severity of their disabilities are likely to increase.

The Government of British Columbia is committed to developing legislation, standards and policies that support people with disabilities to live with dignity and to meaningfully participate in their communities. Accessibility legislation would empower government, persons with disabilities and the broader community to work together to identify, remove and prevent barriers.

In seeking to build cultural change, participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- 1. Are there other initiatives or actions that you would recommend to better promote and support a culture of accessibility and inclusion?*
- 2. Are there leading practices or examples that you know from other jurisdictions or from your own experience that should be considered in the B.C. context?*

The following reflects a summary of the feedback and insights shared:

Early education is important, people need to be aware of the fact we don't live on a level playing field and we need to consider the needs of all.

This should lead to continuity as we move forward with how our built environment is created through the lens of accessibility.

Other bodies need to embrace this proposed legislation, UBCM/AVICC is a good place to start.

The commitment to proper funding and humanizing the system is critical. The current system has complicated and compromised the health of the users.

If it works – highlight it in an easy access public forum where anyone can find it
– standardization of platforms ---

Summary of the feedback and insights shared, continued:

Final Reflections

Top 3 Ideas or Relections to Share

Top 3 Findings or Observations to Share

From the discussions resulting from the meeting, the following are the top 3 findings or observations that participants wished to share:

1 The legislation needs to be consistent with all provinces and federally --

The legislation needs to be drafted by those most affected by it

2 The legislation has to be financially supported

Education is going to be key to acquire the public support for this legislation so it can be properly engaged.

3 --- Humanity and dignity need to be put back into the system with continued care and not have people age out of the system and find they are having to start all over for help and access to service, if it even exists. Stop passing individuals' back and forth causing frustration and ultimately depression which further complicated the issue.

Wrap Up

Final Comments or Feedback

Did the participants in your meeting have any final comments or feedback to share?

Within almost every topic throughout this dialogue session similar frustrations and themes kept coming to the surface.

- The lack of humanity within the current system
- The lack of continued service – the aging out problem
- The disconnect with the medical profession and the access to services required
- The lack of overview of a patient's condition – treat the symptom and not the condition – the Dr. sees the patient and then they are left to their own devices to find the prescribed help.
- Frustration with the access to information system and that there are too few human components within the access to information system --- conflicting information within the system
- The downward spiral caused by frustration with access to information.

Personally this experience was an eye opener – I realized right away we have problems in this community at the most basic of levels.

I think this was a brilliant exercise --- I only wish there had been more time between receiving the information package and the time of reporting. Also personally I found that there were too many

options included within the package provided.

I appreciate that provision was made to customize the meeting but I just found all the different themes and repetition of material a bit confusing.

However at the end of the day I congratulate SPARC for taking on this project and I look forward to working with SPARC as this initiative moves forward

Please if you have any questions with the material provided don't hesitate to contact me directly

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