



# Town of Sidney Accessibility Plan

2023-2026



# Executive Summary

Public sector organizations in British Columbia—including local governments — must publish an Accessibility Plan under the *Accessible British Columbia Act (Accessible BC Act)* by September 1, 2023.

The Town of Sidney engaged the services of an accessibility consulting firm, Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT), to conduct high-level current state explorations of its accessibility. The purpose of these explorations was to proactively identify and make plans to address high priority barriers in Sidney’s Accessibility Plan. This Plan outlines these findings and the subsequent actions to improve accessibility.

Though municipalities in the province have obligations to publish separate plans under the *Accessible BC Act*, Sidney decided to work together with the District of Central, and the District of North Saanich when preparing its Plan because residents live, work, recreate, and access services across the three municipalities.

Although the accessibility initiatives of each municipality will differ based on findings, needs, and priorities specific to that community, there is strategic alignment across the initiatives. This Accessibility Plan has been prepared in consultation with Central Saanich and North Saanich with that alignment in mind.

The *Accessible BC Act* requires that organizations form and consult with an accessibility committee in the preparation and actioning of accessibility plans. The Municipalities of Sidney, Central Saanich, and North Saanich formed the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC) to consult on matters of accessibility across the Municipalities, including the Municipalities’ accessibility plans. Consultations with SPAAC informed the actions found in the Plan.

# Executive Summary

The project team consulted SPAAC during the accessibility exploration phase. Sidney will continue consulting SPAAC through the publishing and actioning of this Accessibility Plan. Consultations with SPAAC focused on recommended areas of focus for the Accessibility Plan, effective engagement methods for residents with disabilities, and members' personal experiences with accessibility and barriers to it.

The project team conducted virtual discovery discussions with key municipal staff from each of the municipalities. These discussions examined recent accessibility improvements, forthcoming initiatives, known barriers across relevant municipal operations, and thoughts on how accessibility could be improved.

These focus groups were conducted cross-municipally according to municipal function/area of relevance, following the *Accessible BC Act*, and SPAAC's recommendations.

This allowed the project team to see where the municipalities were aligned in their accessibility, and where their progress and needs differed. The focus groups looked at employment with the municipalities, delivery of services, police and emergency services, buildings, infrastructure and public spaces, information technology and communications, and transportation.

Municipal staff would like to see staff education and awareness around accessibility prioritized. They would also like to see a degree of alignment in accessibility standards, practices, and strategic initiatives across the Municipalities, where this consistency makes sense. An aligned effort may require capacity building, knowledge sharing, and resourcing. More importantly, this will give residents on the Saanich Peninsula a consistent set of expectations around accessibility as they live, work, and recreate in each of the Municipalities.

The Municipalities also shared key documents related to accessibility. The learnings gathered from the above activities are reported in this Plan.

# Executive Summary

In addition to consulting with SPAAC, the project team engaged with the public through surveys, pop-up engagements across the Saanich Peninsula, and an open house in coordination with Central Saanich's Age-Friendly Community Plan.

The majority of people engaged believe accessibility is an important topic, and they are eager to see changes that lead to a more accessible Sidney. Although there are some differences in opinion over what accessibility looks like and how it is achieved, there is overall alignment in priorities.

The key themes in these engagements fall into four areas:

- Change readiness
- Impacts on daily living
- Mobility and road safety
- Infrastructure and public space

The biggest challenges Sidney is likely to face in advancing accessibility is consensus with partner municipalities and in resourcing (i.e., capital, labour, and expertise).

Based on these findings, LTRT identified opportunities and community priorities for accessibility improvements. These opportunities were reviewed by and endorsed by SPAAC.

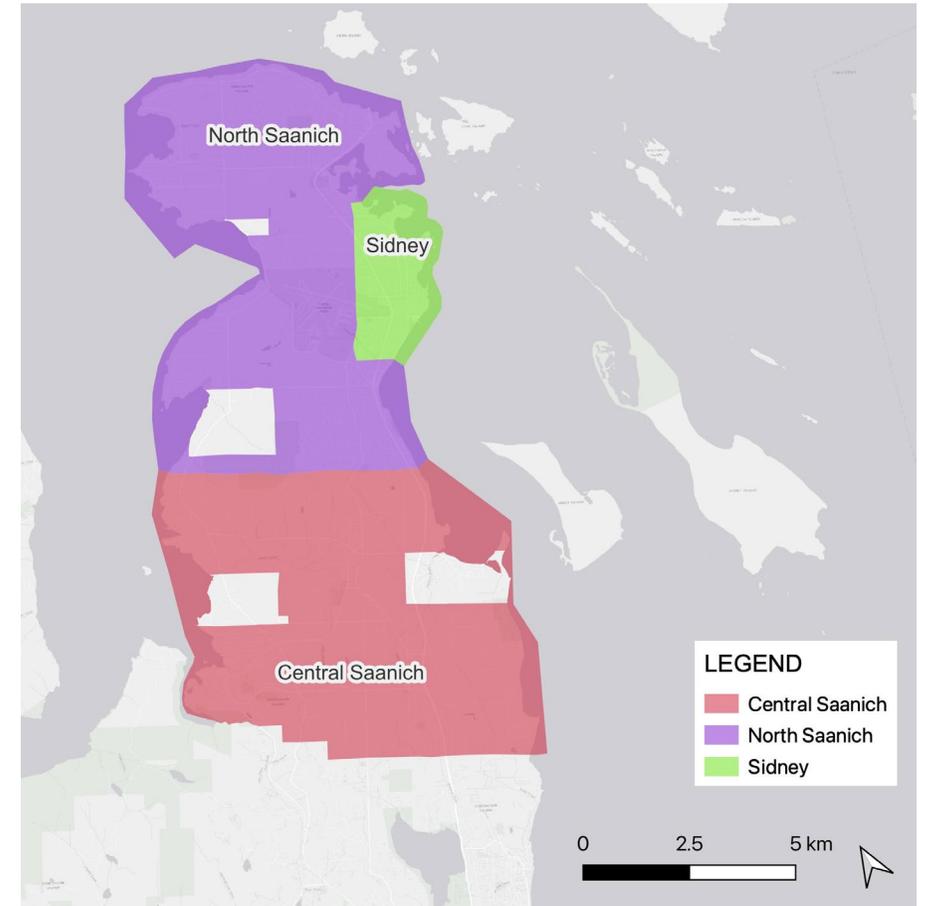
Opportunities were subsequently reviewed by municipal staff and aligned with the partner municipalities' goals for accessibility and resources in the short and medium term. The prioritization and implementation of these opportunities has been determined by each of the municipalities individually.

Sidney's actions for the current 3-year Accessibility Plan (2023-2026) were determined by Municipal staff, SPAAC, and Council.

Overall, Sidney and its partner municipalities feel optimistic about their accessibility journey.

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# Legislative Context, Key Principles, And Definitions

# Legislative Context

## ***Accessible BC Act***

- The *Accessible BC Act* became law in June 2021. It aims to remove all types of barriers to accessibility for British Columbians with disabilities.
- At this time, the *Accessible BC Act* applies to public sector organizations, including municipalities and police services. Organizations are required to establish an accessibility committee, such as SPAAC, develop an accessibility plan, and establish a process for receiving public feedback.
- Accessibility plans must outline how organizations will identify, remove, and prevent barriers. It does not need to be complete or comprehensive. Rather, it is intended to be a developing and evolving plan. Organizations must review and update their plans every three years.
- In the future, accessibility standards will be developed by the Provincial Accessibility Committee with more specific requirements. Standards are expected on employment, service delivery, built environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education, and procurement.

## **Complementary Legislation**

- The *Accessible BC Act* works with other BC laws on accessibility, employment, buildings, and municipalities.
- The *Human Rights Code* prohibits discrimination on the basis of numerous personal characteristics, including physical or mental disability. The *Human Rights Code* prevails over all other laws, including the *Accessible BC Act*.
- Other laws that apply to Sidney and may impact accessibility initiatives include:
  - *Workers Compensation Act* (regarding WorkSafeBC)
  - *Employment Standards Act*
  - *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
  - *Community Charter* (regarding municipalities)
  - *BC Building Code*

# Key Principles

In accordance with *Accessible BC Act* legislation, the following principles were taken into consideration when conducting this assessment, consulting with SPAAC, and developing this Accessibility Plans:

- Self-determination
  - Universal Design
  - Inclusion
  - Adaptability
  - Diversity
  - Collaboration
- **Self-Determination:** The recognition that people with disabilities are in charge of their own lives and determining their own needs and priorities. All accessibility work must stem from this.
  - **Universal Design:** A design principle which holds that spaces, processes, or tools should be welcoming and usable to anyone who accesses them. Rather than retrofitted for accessibility or requiring accommodations, these things should be designed in such a way that there are no barriers to usability for anyone.
  - **Inclusion:** Ensuring that all people, including those with disabilities, can access and are included in the operations of a regulated entity.
  - **Adaptability:** Ensuring that published Accessibility Plans and the goals contained therein are adaptable to the needs and priorities of people with disabilities. These may be subject to change based on evolving priorities of people with disabilities, the emergence of new technologies, or a change in operations of the regulated entity.
  - **Diversity:** The measurable representation or presence of differences in lived experience and intersections of identities (e.g., race, sexuality, age, gender, ability) within a group. In the context of the *Accessible BC Act*, we understand diversity in reference to the range of disabilities in a community and the various intersecting identities that those communities have.
  - **Collaboration:** The recognition that people with disabilities are the experts on their own needs and experiences and that any work being done to support accessibility must be done in collaboration with them. People with disabilities are the most knowledgeable about accessibility and the most impacted by barriers to accessibility. Collaboration is key.

# Definitions and Abbreviations

- **Accessibility:** The practice of making spaces, activities, and resources free of barriers and usable by everyone, including those with disabilities.
- **Accessible British Columbia Act** (*Accessible BC Act*; the Act): A provincial piece of legislation that, among other things, requires public sector organizations to prepare and publish plans to remove barriers to accessibility.
- **Accessibility Plan:** A published document in accordance with *Accessible BC Act* legislation that describes plans to remove barriers in an organization.
- **Barrier:** Something that prevents the full and equal participation of a person accessing a space, activity, or resources (according to the Act).
- **Disability:** An inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier (according to the Act).
- **Impairment:** Physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary or episodic (according to the Act).
- **Organization:** A public sector entity that operates in BC and has obligations to prepare and publish an Accessibility Plan.
- **Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC):** A committee formed by the Town of Sidney, North Saanich, and Central Saanich. SPAAC is made up of municipal residents with disabilities and municipal councillors. It was formed for the purposes of consulting on matters of accessibility across the Saanich Peninsula, including this Accessibility Plan.

# Geographic Context

# Overview of the Saanich Peninsula

- The Saanich Peninsula is located on southern Vancouver Island.
- The ancestral homeland of certain coastal Salish peoples, European settlers began moving into the area of the Saanich Peninsula in the mid-nineteenth century. The Peninsula is named for the anglicized version of WSÁNEĆ, which refers to the Indigenous Nations of the Saanich Peninsula and surrounding areas. The WSÁNEĆ bands include the MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), BŌKĒCĒN (Pauquachin), SṪÁ,UTW\_ (Tsawout), WJŌŁEŁP (Tsartlip), and WSÍKEM (Tseycum) First Nations.
- The provincial capital of Victoria is located south of the Saanich Peninsula. The municipalities on the Saanich Peninsula, including Sidney, are considered part of Greater Victoria.
- The area referred to as the Saanich Peninsula is used somewhat fluidly in local parlance. Technically speaking, the municipalities of Central Saanich, North Saanich, parts of Saanich, and Sidney comprise the Peninsula. Collectively they are member municipalities of the Capital Regional District, which refers to both the Victoria metropolitan area, as well as the regional government for Greater Victoria.
- Due to their proximity and the fact that residents move fluidly between them to live, work, recreate, and access services, the municipalities of Sidney, Central Saanich, and North Saanich, along with Central Saanich Police Services came together to work on accessibility planning.
- In a broad context, the Town of Sidney, and the Districts of North Saanich and Central Saanich are similar. All have populations of fewer than 20,000, are located on the northern tip of the Saanich Peninsula and share many resources and supports, including emergency management, water and sanitary sewer utilities, transportation and recreation facilities, and a high level of collaboration between governments on common issues. However, key differences in geography, demographics, built environment, service offerings and internal capacities vary widely and will present different challenges and opportunities for advancing *the Act* plans within the districts and across the peninsula.

# Town of Sidney

## Survey Snapshot:

25 Sidney residents responded to the survey

15 respondents identified as having a disability, or as both having a disability and being close to someone who does.

## Key Areas for Barriers to Accessibility:

- Buildings and infrastructure including community centres, community facilities, libraries, municipal/town halls, roads, and sidewalks.
- Transportation including parking and active transportation options
- Outdoor spaces including public parks, playgrounds, and public beaches



# Current State

The Town of Sidney is the commercial hub of the northern portion of the Saanich Peninsula. A significant proportion of Sidney's residents are senior citizens, which has given the Town a reputation as a retirement community. While the existence of a disability is not exclusive to senior populations the higher number of seniors living in Sidney has certainly influenced the Town's approach to accessibility in communications, public infrastructure, and other services under its jurisdiction.

Much like the Districts of Central Saanich and North Saanich, the Town of Sidney has a small yet very engaged resident population, many of whom have lived experience of disability. Our discussions with staff and residents highlighted that many of the barriers to accessibility within the Town of Sidney have been previously identified and the town has taken steps to address these barriers through actions outlined in its Active Transportation, Parks, and Official Community Plans. However, work remains to be done to fully implement the accessibility elements of these previous plans. How to prioritize this and future accessibility work, and how to resource it will be key issues for Sidney moving forward.

Note that this is a high-level summary of our findings. For additional information and context on the current state of accessibility in the Town of Sidney, see the "What We Learned" section of this report.

# Demographics

2021 Data	Sidney <sup>1</sup>
Total population	12,318
Population <19	1,510 (12.3%)
Population >65	5,545 (45%)
Average Age	56
Geography	Urban, suburban, industrial

2017 Data	Victoria Metro. Area <sup>2</sup>
Total population	307,700
People with disabilities	89,250 (29%)
People without disabilities	218,450 (71%)

1. Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). *Census Profile*. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed September 4, 2023).

2. Statistics Canada (2017). [Table 13-10-0750-01 Persons with and without disabilities aged 15 years and over, census metropolitan areas](#)

# Methodology

# Accessibility Planning Methodology

The following pages represent the project team's methodology to manage and execute the work of accessibility exploration and planning for Sidney and its partner municipalities, including carrying out public engagement, reporting on findings to the municipalities, and translating those findings into opportunities for improving accessibility that led to this Accessibility Plan:

1. Mission and Focus
2. Document Review
3. Staff Discovery Roundtables
4. SPAAC Consultations
5. Public engagement: Public Survey, Town Hall, and Pop-Up Engagements
6. Analyzing Findings



# 1. Accessibility Planning Mission

## **Mission**

This accessibility planning work was undertaken to fulfill Sidney's obligations under the *Accessible BC Act* and to support accessibility work already being done in Sidney and across its partner municipalities.

Changing demographics, evolving community needs, and uncertainties about the future mean the municipalities are hard at work on various initiatives to ensure that the municipalities are meeting the current needs of their residents, and adapting to changing economic, social, and environmental circumstances.

Among the goals of Sidney are efforts to improve accessibility on the Saanich Peninsula.

This accessibility planning work gives shape to and expands upon accessibility initiatives underway, as well as to spearheads new initiatives. The development and publication of Sidney's Accessibility Plan represents significant commitments to accessibility.

## **Areas of Focus**

Per Accessible BC Act (in addition to other areas not relevant to Sidney):

- Employment
- Delivery of Services
- Built Environment
- Information and Communications
- Transportation
- Procurement

According to SPAAC:

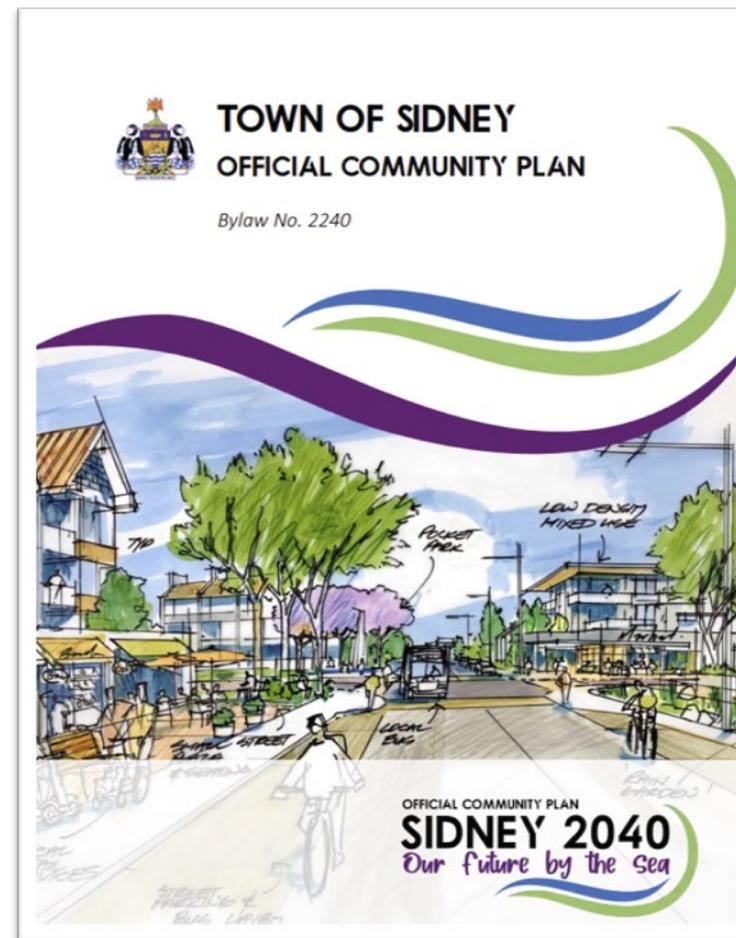
- Raising awareness of accessibility issues in the community
- Buildings, Infrastructure, and Public Spaces
- Communication and Engagement
- Provision of Services
- Employment
- Transportation

# 3. Document Review

To better understand Sidney, its operations, its services, its current initiatives, and how accessibility factors into those things, the project team reviewed relevant documents from Sidney's operations. We reviewed these documents keeping the following questions in mind:

- What do these documents tell us about accessibility in Sidney's operations?
- How does accessibility factor into the current initiatives being undertaken by Sidney?
- How do these documents help us to better understand Sidney as a district?
- Where do gaps in accessibility exist?
- Where are there opportunities to capitalize on work already being done towards accessibility?

Details of the documents reviewed can be found in the appendices.



# 4. Staff Discovery Roundtables

The project team conducted seven staff roundtables over two weeks for the purpose of understanding the current state of accessibility within Sidney and across the Municipalities. The purpose of the roundtables was to ascertain what actions had been taken on accessibility to date, what the current culture around accessibility is within the local government's public service, and where staff felt accessibility ought to be prioritized in the near future. We were also interested in the personal experiences of staff regarding accessibility.

Each roundtable session had at least one representative from each municipality's relevant department/division per ABCA area of focus:

- Employment
- Buildings, infrastructure and public spaces
- Information technology, communications and engagement
- Provision of services
- Provision of emergency services
- Transportation

## Guiding Questions Used to Facilitate Staff Roundtables

- What work has been done on accessibility to date? Any recent successes?
- What do you feel are the greatest barriers to accessibility in your division of work?
- What accessibility work would you like to see prioritized in your division of work?
- Have you received any feedback from the community or from coworkers with disabilities about accessibility?
- Have you personally experienced barriers to accessibility as an employee?

# 5. SPAAC Consultations

SPAAC is a joint tri-municipal committee established by the Town of Sidney, the District of Central Saanich, and the District of North Saanich. The committee's stated purpose is to provide commentary and recommendations to Saanich Peninsula local governments on policies, programs, services, built environments, infrastructure, and outdoor spaces to improve the livability, inclusivity, and accessibility for persons with disabilities who live, work, and play on the Saanich Peninsula.

The formation of SPAAC and early consultations between the partner municipalities and SPAAC were important in giving shape to this accessibility planning work. Further consultations with SPAAC were informative to the nature of public engagement with local communities, and to the opportunities identified and incorporated into this Plan.

The project team deployed a pre-meeting survey exclusively for SPAAC members. The results of this survey were used to establish our working relationship with SPAAC, and to better tailor the questions posed to residents in the public engagement surveys. See Appendix 2 for the survey.

Additionally, we conducted an in-person presentation to SPAAC members, members of council, and staff liaisons. The presentation was followed by a Q&A period where SPAAC members were able to ask questions and provide comments and critique on the project and public engagement efforts.



## SPAAC Questionnaire to Support Accessibility Plan

We have prepared this questionnaire with accessibility in mind. Please let us know if there is a more accessible way for you to participate by reaching out to [haley@ltrt.ca](mailto:haley@ltrt.ca). We are happy to make other arrangements.

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback about your experiences with accessibility in your communities. This questionnaire has been prepared for the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC) by Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT), an independent accessibility consulting firm. The three municipalities of Saanich Peninsula (Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney) retained the services of LTRT to support them with their Accessibility Plans under the Accessible British Columbia Act.

It is important that the municipalities' Accessibility Plans reflect the needs and priorities of people with disabilities in the community. The following questionnaire is a forum for you to share your thoughts, experiences, and priorities about accessibility with the municipalities of the Saanich Peninsula. Your feedback will be used to support the drafting of the municipalities' Accessibility Plans. Your responses are voluntary. You may choose to answer some but not all of the questions, though we appreciate as much feedback as possible. Thank you for taking the time to share your valuable insights.

After identifying preliminary opportunities, LTRT met with SPAAC again in September 2023. Their feedback was incorporated into this plan.

# 6. Public Engagement

The project team deployed a multi-faceted approach to consultation and engagement to reach as many Saanich Peninsula residents as possible and to maximize the accessibility of the consultation process.

- The team held three ‘pop-up’ style public engagement sessions in the Town of Sidney, the District of North Saanich, and the District of Central Saanich.
- The team also participated in a booth session at the Age-Friendly Community Plan consultation in the District of Central Saanich.
- An online survey was deployed consisting of 11 questions. The survey received a total of 79 responses between the weeks of July 17 and September 9.

Details of the public engagement can be found in Appendix 4.

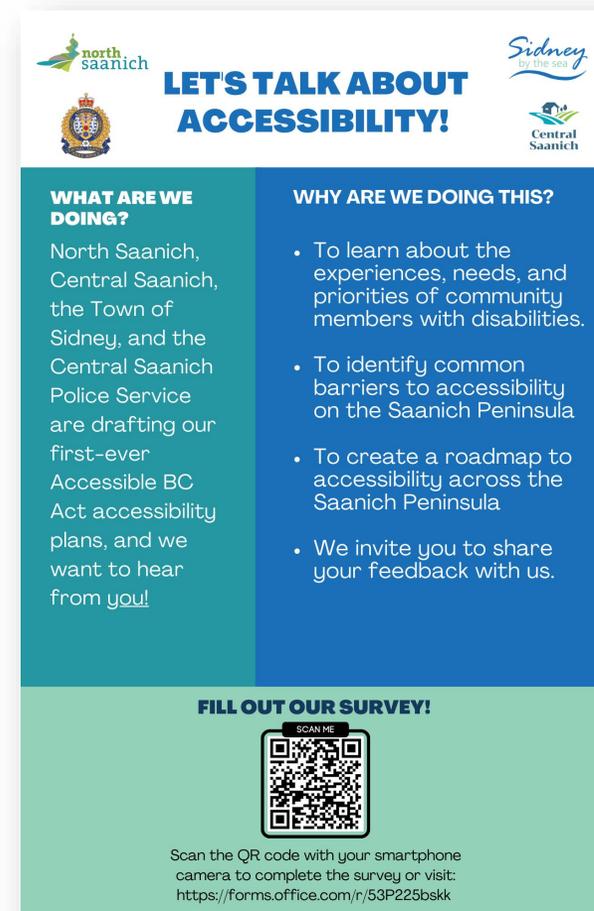


Fig 1. Pop-up engagement handout flyer.

# 7. Analyzing Findings

## Making Recommendations

Upon completing the identified discovery activities, including public engagement, the project team analyzed the findings from each of these activities, and compared the results among activities. We analyzed the findings keeping in mind the following:

- Which themes, barriers, and priorities were **most important to people with disabilities** living, working, and recreating in the Municipalities?
- Which themes, barriers, and priorities were **most consistently identified** in our findings?
- Which themes, barriers, and priorities were **most consistent across the Municipalities**? In other words, what were the commonalities across the Municipalities? And how could these commonalities be leveraged for strategic alignment of accessibility planning among the Municipalities?
- Which themes, barriers, and priorities **aligned with municipal initiatives already underway**? In other words, where were there opportunities to align the Municipalities' Accessibility Plans with work already being done?
- Which themes, barriers, and priorities are **most relevant and most realistic** to action over the next 3 years, according to a SMART goals approach?

## Prioritization

Inevitably, the project team identified more accessibility opportunities than Sidney can realistically implement within the three-year timeframe of its initial plan. In determining which initiatives to implement initially, Sidney took into account the following prioritization framework:<sup>3</sup>

- **Prevention:** Initiatives that will prevent barriers from being created during the lifespan of the plan. This results in the prioritization of initiatives to ensure accessibility is considered in policy, planning, and procurement. It is far easier and cheaper to prevent barriers than it is to remove them.
- **Internal momentum:** If activities are already underway or planned, they are good opportunities to embed accessibility improvements as small additions to a larger undertaking.
- **Cost:** The cost of initiatives is necessarily a consideration when determining which to implement. Some improvements may require budgeting or applying for funding; and others may be possible with no or minimal cost.
- **Impact:** Prioritize barriers that have the most significant impact on people with disabilities and that impact the most people with disabilities. The perspectives of people with disabilities are key when considering impact.
- **Timeline:** Some initiatives will take a long time. You may want to prioritize some that are quick to demonstrate progress.

# What We Learned

Document Review

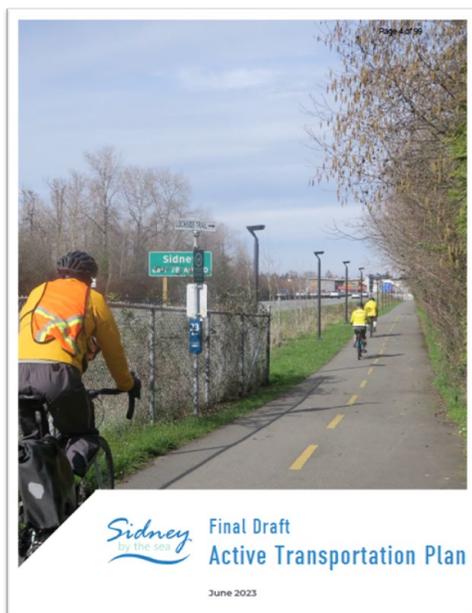
Staff Roundtables

SPAAC

# What We Learned – Documents\*

## Current Initiatives

All three municipalities are broadly aligned in their approaches to improving accessibility through their most recent Official Community Plans (note that the District of North Saanich is still in the process of developing its 2023 Official Community Plan), Active Transportation plans (either complete or in process), and parks strategies and masterplans.



## Areas for Improvement

While Sidney does have existing processes for accommodation requests, they are largely informal and have room for improvement to better reflect best practices.

Job description templates and active job descriptions use wording that can be perceived as ableist, particularly around ‘personal qualities’ such as communication skills, ability to multi-task, and ability to work under pressure in fast paced environments.

None of the Municipalities Financial Plans or recent budgets included standing line items for accessibility features in Council, committee meetings, or public events.

A consistent barrier, regardless of the municipality, is the lack of plain language usage in official documents, meeting minutes, and plans. This is a very common barrier and one that can be resolved through a formalized communications process that includes plain language requirements. Some documents, particularly legal ones, are challenging to write in plain language. Plain language alternatives or summaries can meet the need for simpler language and mitigate the legal risk.<sup>4-6</sup>

Some of the technical formatting of internal and public-facing documents may present barriers. <sup>23</sup>

# Staff Roundtables: Town of Sidney

## Employment

- As a result of an aging population and high costs of living, Sidney is struggling to attract and retain talent to fulfill vacancies in the Municipality. More accessible employment practices may help to reduce the labour shortage.
- The existing accommodations process has room for improvement to better reflect best practices.

## Information and Communications

- A website redesign to meet WCAG 2.0 AA criteria will roll out in Fall 2023.
- Pursuing a Town logo redesign with colour contrast.
- Trying to establish a protocol for tech and platform usage that considers accessibility.
- Changing the look of the town newsletter to give it more accessibility features.

## Transportation

- Active Transportation Plan was successfully adopted in Council in July 2023.
- There was some concern over the proposed establishment of bike lanes. Public perception of bike lanes is highly polarized, depending on who you consult.
- Sidney is a highly walkable community. Many residents prefer to walk or use mobility devices to access their needs, rather than drive. Yet, because it is the business and service hub of the Peninsula, traffic and parking can be an issue as Central and North Saanich residents frequent the area.
- Public transportation options are not available in all areas of town, and handyDART service is reportedly unreliable, according to members of the public with disabilities whom we consulted.

# Staff Roundtables: Town of Sidney

## Services including Emergency Services

- Many services are contracted out, including waste management, and recreational services.
- Municipality is responsible for road maintenance, sewer and watermain maintenance, public parks, waterfront access, land use planning, and municipal taxes.
- Sidney previously had a kiosk at Municipal Hall where residents could get in-person support to sign-up for “My Sidney”, a portal for managing things like property taxes. Noted that such a kiosk was beneficial for seniors and people with disabilities who might find some services difficult to navigate independently.
- Sidney’s fire chief spoke to SPAAC regarding accessibility for emergency services.
- Sidney is making plans to proactively identify vulnerable groups with different needs in an emergency.
- Wellness checks is one strategy emergency services personnel use to connect with residents, typically during potentially dangerous situations such as extreme weather.
- Interested in developing an emergency response plan including best practices for people with disabilities.
- Interest in precedent bylaws for visual and auditory alarms.

## Built Environment and Public Space

- In 2021, Sidney updated its land use bylaws to increase requirements around accessible parking spaces.
- Recent curb cut and sidewalk improvements were made throughout the community.
- Though there are provincial building code standards for accessible units in multi-unit residences, there is no mechanism to monitor and enforce who has access to those units.



Crosswalk at Beacon Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Sidney, BC. Multiple residents and staff commented on the improved safety and accessibility of this intersection with the addition of reduced corner radii and tactile walking surface indicators. Photo Credit: Kaila Hunte, Left Turn Right Turn

# What We Learned – SPAAC

SPAAC shared its thoughts through a preliminary online survey and through an in-person consultation at SPAAC's July committee meeting. The survey focused on SPAAC members' personal experiences and their priorities for upcoming accessibility initiatives.

The in-person consultation focused on SPAAC's thoughts about how best to engage people in the Peninsula during public engagement activities, on the work the Municipalities are doing to advance accessibility planning initiatives, and on what they would like to see featured in the partner Municipalities' Accessibility Plans.

**“An accessible Saanich Peninsula looks like, “A place where people of all abilities ... feel welcome everywhere. Where people with disabilities are actively engaged as partners in the development of the community in meaningful two-way dialogue. Where accessibility and universal design are true values of the community... A community where community decision makers acknowledge that every design or policy decision has potential accessibility implications... embracing the mantra of ‘Nothing About Us Without Us’.” – SPAAC member**

## SPAAC Priorities

- Having elected officials, municipal staff, and others with the ability to make changes listen to the lived experience of people with disabilities.
- Advancing the relationship with SPAAC and other community members with disabilities from one of consultation to collaboration.
- Pursuing civic education on the importance of accessibility, and what accessible municipalities can and should look like.
- Prioritizing accessibility in projects at the planning stages.
- Having the ability to participate fully in all aspects of community life, including the ability to participate in local community celebrations, and the governance (e.g. desire for accessible Council chambers and meetings).
- Accessible, safe transportation, including accessible parking, improved HandiDart service or alternatives, and intermunicipal transit to access a wider array of services.

# Public Engagement: What We Heard

# What We Heard: Overview

The project team carried out public engagement activities in each of the three partner municipalities. Inevitably, residents from all three municipalities were present at each engagement due to their proximity. Therefore, the following engagement feedback represents the views of residents across the Peninsula. The feedback reported here is both broadly applicable across the Peninsula, and to Sidney specifically.

Public engagement activities elicited various responses regarding accessibility on the Saanich Peninsula. Community members from all three Municipalities discussed the barriers they've experienced and their vision for a more accessible life in Sidney, Central Saanich, and North Saanich. The key themes and areas of interest that emerged are. These themes are discussed in greater detail in the following sections of this Plan.



Change readiness



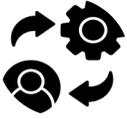
Impacts on daily living



Mobility and road safety



Infrastructure and public spaces



# Change Readiness

Many community members are enthusiastic about and support accessibility improvements across the peninsula. Many community members' understanding of disability and accessibility is primarily focused on physical disabilities and physical barriers to accessibility in the community. An understanding of invisible disabilities was also present but to a lesser extent.

Many community members do not have a nuanced understanding of disability as they do not have close ties to the disability community or lived experience of disability. This has strongly informed perspectives on the necessity of accessibility improvements. Some community members questioned the merits of spending public funds to improve accessibility.

Community members with disabilities want to see the Municipalities improve accessibility to improve their current quality of life and the quality of life of future residents. They view leaving their communities and support networks as an absolute last resort. Disabled community members highlighted that the attitudinal barriers they experience are significant and have a negative impact on their sense of belonging, safety, and value within the community.

This theme from the public engagements was also reflected in the project team's engagements with municipal staff. The change readiness and enthusiasm of municipal staff also varies and is impacted by their personal experiences with disability. Municipal staff are facing multiple and sometimes competing priorities that further impact their capacity to prioritize accessibility improvements and knowledge gaps around how to embed accessibility in certain processes, workflows, and projects was highlighted as a barrier. It can be difficult to execute on initiatives without the requisite background knowledge. As such, staff would like to undergo job specific and practical training around accessibility that can better equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to ensure accessibility is considered and accounted for in their work.

Despite the differences in attitude and understanding of accessibility and disability, most community members who participated in this public engagement do want to see accessibility prioritized on the peninsula and want to see initiatives that improve it followed through on in the near term.

**“It is important for the municipality to use an ‘Accessibility Lens’ on all decisions being made. How any decision whether it be housing, climate change or recreation needs to be looked at through that lens as a matter routine and planning. Not as afterthoughts.” – Community member with a physical and cognitive disability**



# Impacts on Daily Living

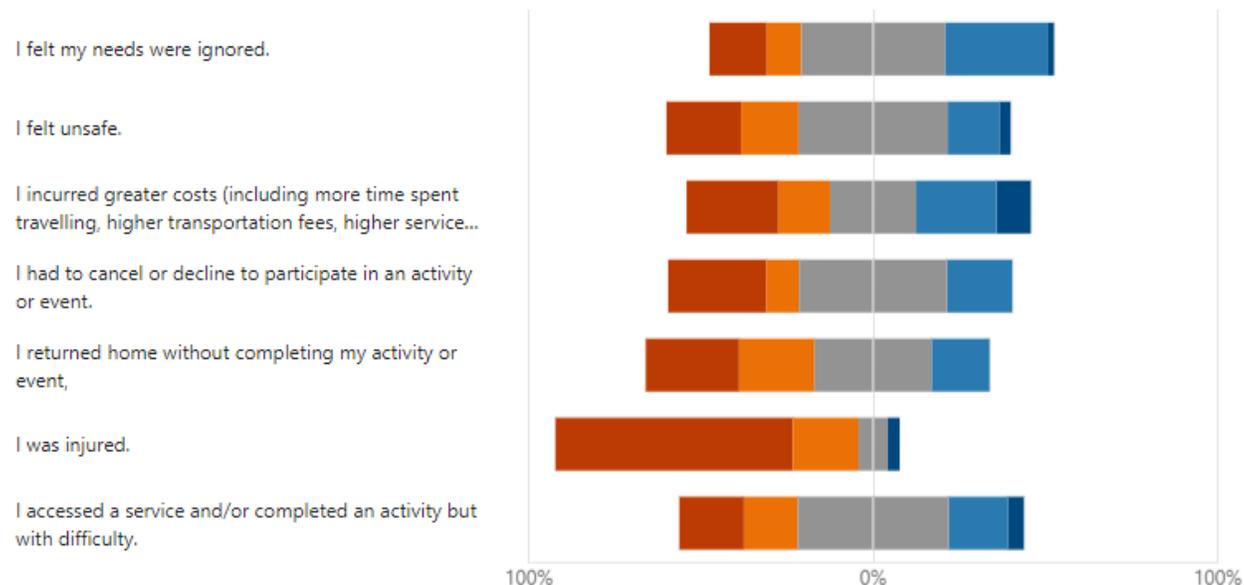
In the public survey respondents were asked to convey the impact barriers have had on their lives. The most prominent response to the impact question was the sense that their needs were not respected or accounted for. 70% of respondents reported that they experienced the feeling that their needs were not met either sometimes or often. One respondent noted that the “Lack of accessibility makes it difficult to participate in community events.”

The second most impactful consequence was incurring greater costs, financially or otherwise. 56% of respondents said they incurred greater costs sometimes or often when trying to carry out the tasks and activities of daily living. These experiences are part of a much more widespread phenomenon called the ‘Disability Tax’<sup>7-9</sup> in which people with disabilities expend more of their time, emotional and physical labour, and capital to live than people without disabilities.

The barriers highlighted by survey respondents further confirm barriers previously identified by municipal staff and other consultants on projects such as the Municipalities Active Transportation Plans, Age-Friendly Community Plans, and Official Community Plans.

What was/were the impact(s) of the accessibility barriers you encountered?

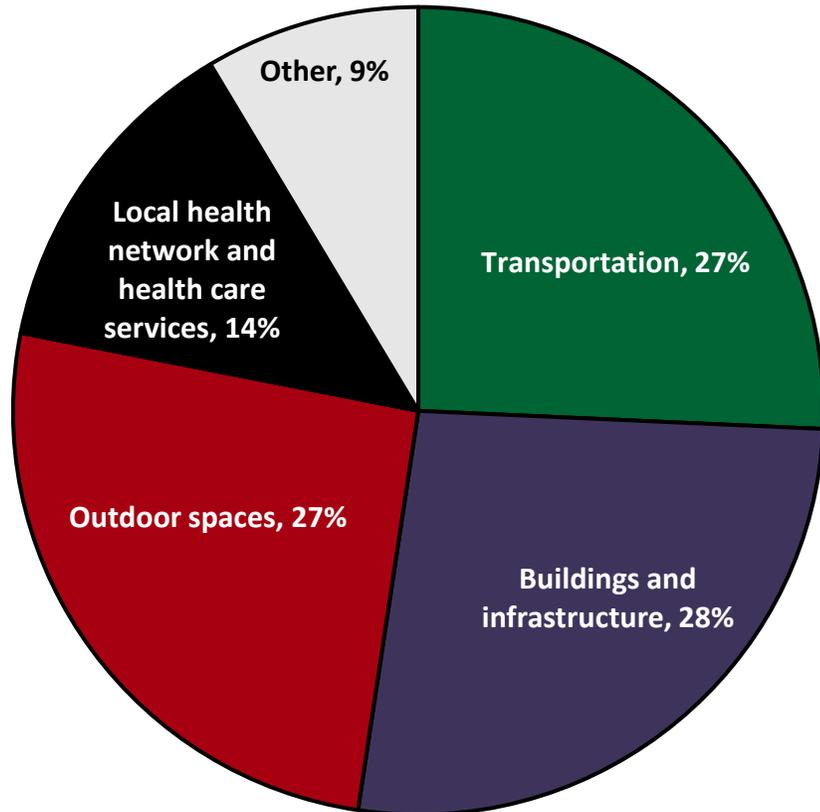
Legend: Never (dark orange), Rarely (light orange), Sometimes (grey), Often (blue), Always (dark blue)





# Mobility and Road Safety

In which of the following have you experienced barriers to accessibility in your municipality?



Respondents discussed difficulties in daily activities due to inconsistent access to accessible parking spaces and public transportation. They would like the Municipalities to prioritize accessible parking spaces in public parking lots and areas with street parking. Community members would also like to see the Municipalities work more collaboratively with local businesses to ensure there are adequate accessible parking spaces and that these spaces comply with the current standards on accessible parking.

While public transportation is outside the Municipalities' purview, respondents wished that the Municipalities advocate for increased service for conventional transit and paratransit service on the peninsula (i.e., handyDART). Respondents conveyed the need for better and more consistent amenities at bus stops such as seating that is winterized, more lighting, and even surfaces for safer debarking.

Respondents noted that they feel unsafe in certain areas due to the lack of sidewalks (or their condition and width) and other active transportation infrastructure such as bike lanes and multi-use pathways and trails. Community members hope that the Municipalities will increase the number of inter-municipal cycling and pedestrian connections. Respondents would like to see additional sidewalks installed in the more rural and lower density areas and for existing sidewalks to be regularly assessed and maintained.

Respondents also would like for the Municipalities to reduce and harmonize their speed limits and make improvements to intersections to improve safety, such as signalized intersections, tactile walking surface indicators, accessible pedestrian signals, and elevated crosswalks.



# Infrastructure And Public Space

Respondents commented on the recent improvements to the District of North Saanich municipal hall. Community members stressed that they would like to see any renovations or new construction include accessibility in the design and exceed current building code standards.

The Municipalities have a high degree of variability in their geographies including urbanized, commercial, suburban, and rural areas. Responses primarily related to public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, trails, and beaches and other public facilities such as washrooms, wayfinding and information infrastructure and public seating options.

Many respondents desired increased availability of public washrooms with a focus on accessible public washrooms that are wheelchair accessible and available for use year-round. There are a limited number of accessible playgrounds on the Saanich Peninsula, and some are difficult to access without a vehicle. Respondents would like for future playground projects to have accessibility considered from the beginning planning stages and to have these amenities be accessible without a vehicle where possible (i.e., located near public transit infrastructure, near trails, pedestrian and bicycle paths etc.).

Respondents would like for the Municipalities to consider alternative surface materials on groomed public trails and naturalized walkways to reduce tripping hazards.

Respondents spoke to the sense of belonging they feel when using public spaces that account for their needs and support their full and equal participation in recreation activities.

Respondents spoke to the usefulness of wayfinding but highlighted that they are not always accessible because many do not include tactile wayfinding or larger text. An additional barrier is that wayfinding does not always display up-to-date information. Respondents wished to see these structures updated with accessibility and useability at the forefront and to have information updated regularly to ensure they are accurate and reliable.

# ANALYSIS

# Impacts of Barriers

Municipal staff and residents alike agree that accessibility needs to be a part of Sidney's future. The project team's analysis revealed that, although there are a few points of contention over how to achieve accessibility (e.g. some residents feel bike lanes provide greater access, others believe they pose barriers to it), a majority of respondents are aligned in their priorities when it comes to where they would like to see improvements in accessibility.

Through staff discussions and the document review it is clear that there is a strong desire among municipal staff to advance accessibility initiatives. Many staff are understanding of the reasons why accessibility improvements are needed even if they don't have personal experience with disability. Staff were candid about where they are at in their learning journeys and what knowledge gaps they would like to fill. It is evident that there is a strong core of employees who want to see these goals advanced through the work that they do.

Overall, the public will is in support of a more accessible Saanich Peninsula.

The project team's discovery activities revealed that there is some change management, culture change, and capacity-building needed. This is not unusual as we are, as a society, experiencing significant cultural shifts in awareness, understanding, and acceptance of various realities and lived experiences that have historically been suppressed or seen as out of the norm. These attitudinal barriers allow other physical, procedural, and legislative barriers to persist and are some of the most difficult barriers to remove. The impact of barriers can most clearly be seen in the data generated through the public survey, where respondents were asked to convey the impact barriers have had on their lives. The most prominent response to the impact question was the sense that their needs were not respected or accounted for. 70% of respondents reported that they experienced the feeling that their needs were not met either sometimes or often.

The second most impactful consequence was related to respondents incurring greater costs, financially or otherwise, when coming up against barriers on the Saanich Peninsula. 56% of respondents said they incurred greater costs sometimes or often when trying to carry out the tasks and activities of daily living. These experiences are part of a much more widespread phenomenon called the 'Disability Tax'<sup>7-9</sup> in which people with disabilities expend more of their time, emotional and physical labour, and capital to live than people without disabilities.

# Impacts of Barriers

Barriers to accessibility have very real emotional, financial, physical and environmental impacts on those who experience them. While the dataset for this community survey is small, 80% of respondents were living with a disability or had intimate knowledge and experience of someone who is disabled. The barriers highlighted by survey respondents further confirm barriers previously identified by staff at the municipalities and other consultants on projects such as active transportation plans, age-friendly community plans, and official community plans.

While attitudinal barriers are amongst the most pervasive in our society, they are not barriers that municipalities can solve on their own. There is work that the municipalities can undertake to facilitate the breakdown of these barriers which is outlined later in this Plan.

Other barriers identified are more discreet and do have specific actions that can be taken by the municipalities to remove them. For example, all municipalities lack a formal accommodations policy and process for municipal employees. Public buildings such as the municipal town halls in Central Saanich and the Town of Sidney have some accessibility challenges and this is a known issue amongst staff and residents.

Wayfinding elements such as information kiosks and signage are not accessible for blind or low vision users and sometimes contain outdated information.

Public infrastructure, more specifically the lack of it and the inconsistent application of it, including sidewalks, cycle paths, multi-use trails, and public beach access points present significant barriers to the participation of individuals with disabilities in activities across the Saanich Peninsula. Residents were satisfied overall with their ability to communicate with the municipalities but there exists no formal guidance for employees to ensure accessibility features and best practices are carried out when communicating with the public. Employees have done an admirable job of responding to needs as they arise but, overall, the approach is reactive. Employees cited the need for practical and job specific training to give them the tools they need to execute accessibility initiatives outlined in the municipalities' official community plans, active transportation plans, and parks master plans.

The following actions on improving accessibility seek to address these barriers and provide Sidney with a clear roadmap to reduce and remove existing barriers, and to develop the knowledge and skillsets needed to prevent new barriers from arising.

# ACTIONS

2023-2026

# Overview

This section of the Plan contains Sidney's action plan for accessibility, which the municipality will undertake over the next three years (2023-2026). These actions have been developed according to the findings from the discovery and public engagement activities that informed the plan. Note that improving accessibility in communities is an ongoing process, and this should not be considered a comprehensive list of actions. Undertaking these actions does not mean that Sidney will have achieved full accessibility. It will, however, be more accessible.

These actions have been developed using the criteria outlined on the right.

## **Recommendation Criteria:**

- Centering what is most important to people with disabilities living, working, and recreating in Sidney.
- Prioritizing the most consistently identified themes, barriers, and priorities that emerged through the discovery and engagement process.
- Prioritizing themes, barriers, and priorities that are consistent across the Municipalities to develop strategically-aligned Accessibility Plans, and to promote consistent accessible practices that residents can rely on no matter where they live, work, and recreate on the Peninsula.
- Prioritizing themes, barriers, and priorities that align with broader work already underway in the Municipalities.
- Prioritizing opportunities that are relevant and realistic, and which can be drafted into SMART goals in the individual municipalities.
- Using professional expertise and following best practices.

# Actions: Employment

#	Recommendation
1	<p><b>Accommodations Policies:</b> Develop a comprehensive accessibility accommodations policy and process for municipal employees. Ensure that the policy and process reflect best practices and legal requirements, have clear guidance on timelines for fulfillment of accommodations (if any), expectations for both employee and employer, and clearly designated process owners for the accommodations process.<sup>12</sup></p>
2	<p><b>Training and Awareness</b> - Source and deliver practical training on accessibility to all employees. LTRT recommends that disability and accessibility awareness training be delivered to staff widely. In addition, identify learning needs and deliver training specific to job requirements. For example, accessible customer service training for people interacting with the public, accessibility engineering standards training for infrastructure and environment services employees; communications strategies for responding to a call for a deaf/hard-of-hearing member of the public; evacuating people with physical disabilities safely from a building; The purpose of this is to raise awareness around accessibility in municipal work, and reduce attitudinal barriers to disability.</p>
3	<p><b>Recruitment and Hiring:</b> Conduct a review of recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes for municipal jobs, and make improvements to accessibility accordingly. For example, using plain and inclusive language in job postings to the extent possible, statements in job postings about the availability of accommodations in the recruitment process, confirming the necessity/ relevance of job requirements, and incorporating discussions about accommodations early in the onboarding process. Develop relationships with local service providers and stakeholder organizations to facilitate the implementation of best practices around recruitment and hiring for people with disabilities, and to increase outreach to jobseekers with disabilities on the Peninsula.<sup>13</sup></p>

# Actions: Employment

#	Recommendation
4	<b>Knowledge-building:</b> Consider processes or programs that leverage staff knowledge about accessibility, particularly the professional and lived experience of staff who have disabilities.
5	<b>Consulting:</b> Develop and implement a mechanism to gather the perspectives and experiences of employees with disabilities. This should be a mechanism that protects their confidentiality but also allows for meaningful discussion. <sup>14</sup>
6	<b>Mental health:</b> Review current mental health support mechanisms and consider possible improvements. Improvements might include internal employee support groups, resources, dissemination, and/ or training. <sup>17</sup>

# Actions: Services

#	Recommendation
7	<b>Service desk:</b> Establish a service desk, kiosk, or other method to support residents to access and navigate services. Ensure this service operates on a regular schedule and is well-advertised in the community using accessible communications methods and leveraging relationships with stakeholder organizations to get the word out.
8	<b>Budgets:</b> Include municipal budget line item that will allow the Municipalities to address ad hoc accessibility requests/ expenses that arise unexpectedly throughout the year.
9	<b>Events:</b> Develop and implement accessible events checklist or guidance document that is free to use by local community groups, non-profit and for-profit businesses and organizations who stage events in the community. This could be part of a larger, pre-existing resource library for the community. Ensure this resource is well advertised, and easy to find or access by relevant user groups (e.g. a dedicated tab or page on Municipal website.) <sup>18,19</sup>

# Actions: Emergency Services

#	Recommendation
10	<b>Notifications:</b> Review accessibility of emergency notification systems and make improvements to their accessibility. For example, are the notifications communicated in plain language? <sup>5,6,16</sup> Is information disseminated in a variety of formats? Do people require access to digital technology to receive notifications?
11	<b>Public education:</b> Implement a public education campaign about accessibility and emergency response, including how residents with disabilities can access emergency services and how neighbours can support fellow residents with disabilities in the event of an emergency, and about the importance of visual and auditory alarms in key spaces. Also important is educating the public about what role residents with disabilities play in their own emergency preparedness,
12	<b>Dispatch Training:</b> Source and implement training for emergency dispatch that accounts for disability. For example, train dispatchers to ask things like, “Do you need to be notified in a specific way when emergency response arrives (e.g. via text, or flashing lights in your window,” or “Do you have specific evacuation needs?”) during emergency calls.
13	<b>Emergency Plans:</b> Review and update (or develop if not already available) emergency evacuation plans for Municipal buildings.

# Actions: Information And Communications

#	Recommendation
14	<p><b>Guidance:</b> Include accessibility as part of municipal communications policies. If a formal communications policy doesn't exist, consider developing one and including accessible communications practices as a priority item.<sup>21-22</sup> Additionally, develop guidance on accessibility best practices for social media communications (e.g. alternative text, camel case hashtags, plain language,<sup>5,6,16</sup> video captions) and producing accessible documents (e.g. internal documents, public documents, newsletters). shared internally with employees, public facing documents such as Official Community Plans, community newsletters, etc. Ensure that when updating or developing these policies that consideration is given to both accessible formats and channels of dissemination.</p>
15	<p><b>Websites:</b> Conduct a digital accessibility audit of public websites and internal web systems. Incorporate feedback from these audits when making updates and improvements to websites and intranet. Alternatively, or additionally, work with a digital accessibility specialist when updating or creating digital tools like websites and intranet and engage in user-testing of these systems.<sup>20,23</sup></p>
16	<p><b>Training:</b> Source training on accessible communications best practices and have relevant staff complete training. Note that relevant staff may not just be communications personnel, but anyone who has a role in creating content that is shared with staff or residents.</p>
17	<p><b>Meetings:</b> Develop guidelines for meeting accessibility, both for in-person and virtual meetings. Consider all-staff training on meeting accessibility, including how to use virtual meeting platforms in accessible ways, how to provide accommodations in meetings, and how to prepare and circulate accessible meeting materials.<sup>18,19</sup></p>
18	<p><b>Dissemination:</b> Leverage relationships with service provider and stakeholder organizations to help disseminate relevant communications to ensure that high priority information is reaching residents with disabilities.</p>

# Actions: Transportation

#	Recommendation
19	<b>Prioritizing accessibility:</b> When planning transportation projects, ensure accessibility is a key consideration. This can be captured through works in progress where accessibility has already been included, such as Active Transportation Plans, and in upcoming work such as updates to Transportation Master Plans and Engineering Standards. Prioritize plans that address known accessibility barriers or provide significant upgrades to accessibility and increased safety for vulnerable road users.
20	<b>Consulting People with Disabilities:</b> Consult people with disabilities in the planning and design of transportation-related projects.
21	<b>Sourcing Expertise:</b> Source vendors with expertise and experience designing and building accessible spaces by including accessibility as a project parameter in RFPs.
22	<b>Active transportation:</b> Develop project-specific approaches for active transportation responsive to concerns about accessibility.
23	<b>Transit:</b> Review and work to improve accessibility of municipal bus stops. Improvements may include physical accessibility of the stop, signage, seating, etc. Work with BC Transit to improve accessible transit options, including service delivery, access to information, and bus stop design.

# Actions: Buildings, Infrastructure and Public Spaces

#	Recommendation
24	<b>Planning for accessibility:</b> When making plans for renovations, updates, or construction of municipal buildings and facilities, prioritize accessibility from the earliest stages of planning. Consult people with disabilities in the planning and design of these spaces.
25	<b>Engineering specifications:</b> When updating municipal engineering specifications integrate accessibility requirements within those specifications..
26	<b>Planning framework:</b> Develop a standard accessibility review process for staff involved with designing new municipal buildings, facilities, and public spaces, including when and how to integrate accessibility in planning and projects. <sup>28</sup>
27	<b>Signage:</b> When updating or replacing non-regulatory municipal signage, integrate accessibility features into new designs. Accessibility features include things like plain language, <sup>5,6,16</sup> easy-to-read font, visual cues, and tactile signage. <sup>25</sup>
28	<b>Washrooms:</b> Identify and implement opportunities to increase the number of public and accessible washrooms. When designing these washrooms, consider different user needs including adults with disabilities who may require changing stations. Ensure that these washrooms are clearly identified on public information kiosks and other wayfinding elements such as point of interest markers and park information kiosks. <sup>25</sup>

# Actions: Buildings, Infrastructure and Public Spaces

#	Recommendation
29	<b>Mobility device infrastructure:</b> Identify opportunities to increase infrastructure for electric mobility devices (e.g. power wheelchairs, e-scooters), including parking and charging stations. Ensure that these charging stations are clearly identified on public information kiosks and other wayfinding elements such as point of interest markers and park information kiosks.
30	<b>Public seating:</b> Increase the availability of public seating (e.g. accessible benches). Ensure that the design and construction of this seating accommodates a range of body types and disabilities, and that the location of seating does not create new barriers. Where practical clearly identify accessible seating locations on public information kiosks and other wayfinding elements such as point of interest markers and park information kiosks. <sup>25,26,29</sup>
31	<b>Parking:</b> Ensure the adequate provision of accessible parking spaces aligned with best practices and community needs and increase as opportunities arise, including spaces to accommodate side-loading vans. <sup>25</sup>
32	<b>Aligning bylaws:</b> The Municipalities will work to develop consistent accessibility standards, especially where public spaces are concerned, to the extent feasible. For example, consistency in accessibility of crosswalks, sidewalks, and intersections; consistency in accessibility of signage and wayfinding. <sup>15</sup>

# Actions: Public Awareness and Engagement

#	Recommendation
33	<b>Public education and awareness:</b> Develop and launch a public education campaign on accessibility in the Municipalities aimed at both residents and the business community, including things like why it is a priority for the Municipalities, how the Municipalities are taking action towards accessibility (e.g. through their Accessibility Plans, OCPs, and Active Transportation Plans), and how the public can engage with the municipalities on accessibility (i.e. through the feedback mechanisms established in accordance with Accessible BC Act requirements). This can include social media messaging, dedicated webpages to accessibility, columns in community newsletters, and postering. The purpose of this is to raise awareness around accessibility, reduce attitudinal barriers to disability, and give a forum for engagement around accessibility.
34	<b>Indigenous representation:</b> SPAAC does not have any Indigenous members though the Act requires it. The Municipalities must undertake sustained efforts to build relationships with local Indigenous communities and hold space for their perspectives. Consider changes to how SPAAC operates if needed to be compatible with Indigenous approaches.

# Recommendations: Procurement

#	Recommendation
35	<b>Policies:</b> Update procurement policies to incorporate accessibility considerations where applicable. Consider including statements of social value to RFP requirements. <sup>23,24</sup>

# CONCLUSION

# Conclusion

Changing demographics, socioeconomics, and community needs and interests contribute to the evolution of the communities. Increasing accessibility on the Saanich Peninsula is a key part of that evolution. Reducing barriers results in stronger communities, as people are able to live, work, recreate, and age in place in ways that are accessible and sustainable.

While accessibility is increasingly becoming a priority in Sidney, municipal staff and residents alike are eager to see accessibility increase its profile and scope.

Sidney's Accessibility Plan demonstrates both a commitment to and a roadmap for the implementation of advancements to accessibility across the peninsula.



# APPENDICES

# Appendix 1: Document Review

## Town of Sidney

- Active transportation plan (2023)
- Official Community Plan (2022)
- Employment Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Disability Management Policy
- Parks Masterplan (2018)
- Sidney Accessibility Webpage
- Municipal Organization Chart
- Key Directions Official Community Plan Update (2021)
- Respectful Workplace Policy (2014)

## North Saanich

- Official Community Plan (2007)
- Official Community Plan Engagement Summary (2022)
- Housing Needs Report (2020)
- Jubilee Park Engagement Strategy
- Active Transportation Plan (2021)
- Budget Engagement Summary
- Beach Access Review
- Road Corridor Improvements Engagement Summary (2023)

# Appendix 1: Document Review

## Central Saanich

- **Bullying, Discrimination, and Harassment Policy**
- **Employment Policy**
- **2023 Financial Plan and Engagement summary**
- **Active Transportation Plan (2022)**
- **Draft Age Friendly Community Plan**
- **Brand Guidelines**
- **2023 Community Satisfaction Survey**
- **Official Community Plan**
- **Saanichton Village Design Plan**
- **Engineering and Yard Organization Chart and Municipal Organization Chart**
- **Rick Hansen Foundation Municipal Hall Scorecard (2019)**
- **Signage and Wayfinding Program Plan**
- **Active Transportation Plan Public Engagement Summary**

## Central Saanich Police Service

- **Central Saanich Police Service 2023-2026 Strategic Plan**
- **Board Manual, November 2022**
- **Strategic Plan 2022**

# Appendix 2: SPAAC Survey

## SPAAC Questionnaire to Support Accessibility Plan

We have prepared this questionnaire with accessibility in mind. Please let us know if there is a more accessible way for you to participate by reaching out to [haley@ltrt.ca](mailto:haley@ltrt.ca). We are happy to make other arrangements.

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback about your experiences with accessibility in your communities. This questionnaire has been prepared for the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC) by Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT), an independent accessibility consulting firm. The three municipalities of Saanich Peninsula (Central Saanich, North Saanich, and Sidney) retained the services of LTRT to support them with their Accessibility Plans under the Accessible British Columbia Act.

It is important that the municipalities' Accessibility Plans reflect the needs and priorities of people with disabilities in the community. The following questionnaire is a forum for you to share your thoughts, experiences, and priorities about accessibility with the municipalities of the Saanich Peninsula. Your feedback will be used to support the drafting of the municipalities' Accessibility Plans. Your responses are voluntary. You may choose to answer some but not all of the questions, though we appreciate as much feedback as possible. Thank you for taking the time to share your valuable insights.

\*Please keep in mind that your responses should focus on experiences in your community, and services provided by the municipalities. Schools and hospitals, for example, are NOT municipal services and are therefore not under the jurisdiction of the three municipalities

# Appendix 2: SPAAC Survey

1. Please describe your relationship to disability and accessibility. E.g. Live with a disability; support system to someone with a disability.  
  
If you are comfortable sharing, please describe your disability and/or accessibility needs.
2. What does an accessible Saanich Peninsula look like to you? What does it mean to you?
3. Please describe your experiences with accessibility in your municipality. Has your experience largely been positive, neutral, negative? Please explain.
4. Please describe your experiences with accessibility in your municipality. Has your experience largely been positive, neutral, negative? Please explain.
5. Thinking about the spaces and services you use most often, what has your experience of accessibility been with respect to them? Please describe any barriers you have encountered.
6. What things would you like to see the municipalities of the Saanich Peninsula continue doing with respect to accessibility?
7. What are the top 3 things you would like to see the municipalities of the Saanich Peninsula focus on improving with respect to accessibility?

# Appendix 3: Public Survey

- The Municipalities distributed an accessible online survey through their social media platforms, community newsletters, and official websites.
- The survey provided an alternate method for community members to share their feedback about accessibility. For those who couldn't attend a pop-up, who had more to say about accessibility following the pop-ups, or for whom providing written feedback was preferable or more accessible, the online survey provided another outlet.
- The survey was open to the public starting the week of July 17<sup>th</sup>, and initially closed on August 18<sup>th</sup>. The survey was briefly reopened August 29<sup>th</sup>-September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Survey engagement is detailed on the following slides. The full survey can be found in the appendices.



The image is a screenshot of a presentation slide with a dark green background. At the top left is a white diamond-shaped logo with a green border, containing a white Y-shaped arrow pointing left and right, with the text 'LEFT TURN' and 'RIGHT TURN' on either side. To the right of the logo is the title 'Feedback on Accessibility - Saanich Peninsula Municipalities' in white text. Below the title are four paragraphs of white text. The first paragraph mentions a questionnaire prepared with accessibility in mind and provides an email address for ASL responses. The second paragraph asks for more accessible participation methods. The third paragraph thanks the respondent and identifies the consulting firm LTRT. The fourth paragraph explains the importance of the survey for the municipalities' Accessibility Plans. At the bottom, a small asterisked note clarifies that the survey focuses on municipal services.

**Feedback on Accessibility - Saanich Peninsula Municipalities**

We have prepared this questionnaire with accessibility in mind. If you prefer to answer this questionnaire in American Sign Language (ASL), a video response can be sent to [consultations@ltrt.ca](mailto:consultations@ltrt.ca)

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# Appendix 3: Public Survey

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# Appendix 3: Public Survey Questions

1. Are you a person with a disability?
  - Yes
  - No, but someone I am close to has a disability and I have thoughts about accessibility
  - No, but I have thoughts on accessibility
  - Yes, and someone I am close to has a disability
2. Which types of disabilities impact you and/or people you are close to?
  - Physical
  - Hearing
  - Vision
  - Intellectual/Cognitive
  - Mental Health
  - Neurodivergence
  - Chronic Pain
  - Prefer not to disclose
  - I do not have a disability, nor am I close to someone with a disability
  - Other
3. How old are you?
  - Youth (under 30)
  - Adult (31-55)
  - Older Adult (55+)
4. In which of the Saanich Peninsula municipalities do you live?
  - Central Saanich
  - North Saanich
  - Sidney
  - I do not live on the peninsula, but I visit frequently and have thoughts about accessibility.
5. In which of the following have you faced barriers to accessibility in your municipality? (Select all that apply) Youth (under 30)
  - Buildings and infrastructure, including community centres, community facilities, libraries, municipal/town halls, roads, and sidewalks.
  - Outdoor spaces, including public parks, beaches, and playgrounds.
  - Transportation, including parking and active transport options like cycling and walking.
  - Municipal services, including utilities, waste management, emergency services, and municipal elections.
  - Communications, including communicating with municipal staff, the websites, and council or committee meetings.
  - Policing by Central Saanich Police Service
  - Local health network and health care services

# Appendix 3: Public Survey Questions

6. What was/were the impact(s) of the accessibility barriers you encountered?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I felt my needs were ignored.					
I felt unsafe.					
I incurred greater costs (including more time spent traveling, higher transportation fees, higher service fees, etc.).					
I had to cancel or decline to participate in an activity or event.					
I returned home without completing my activity or event.					
I was injured.					
I accessed a service and/or completed an activity but with difficulty.					

7. Which of your municipality's spaces and services do you most often use? Why are these spaces and services important to you?

8. Thinking about the spaces and services you use most often, what has your experience of accessibility been with respect to them? Please describe any barriers you have encountered.

9. What are the spaces you avoid or the things you don't do in your municipality due to accessibility barriers?

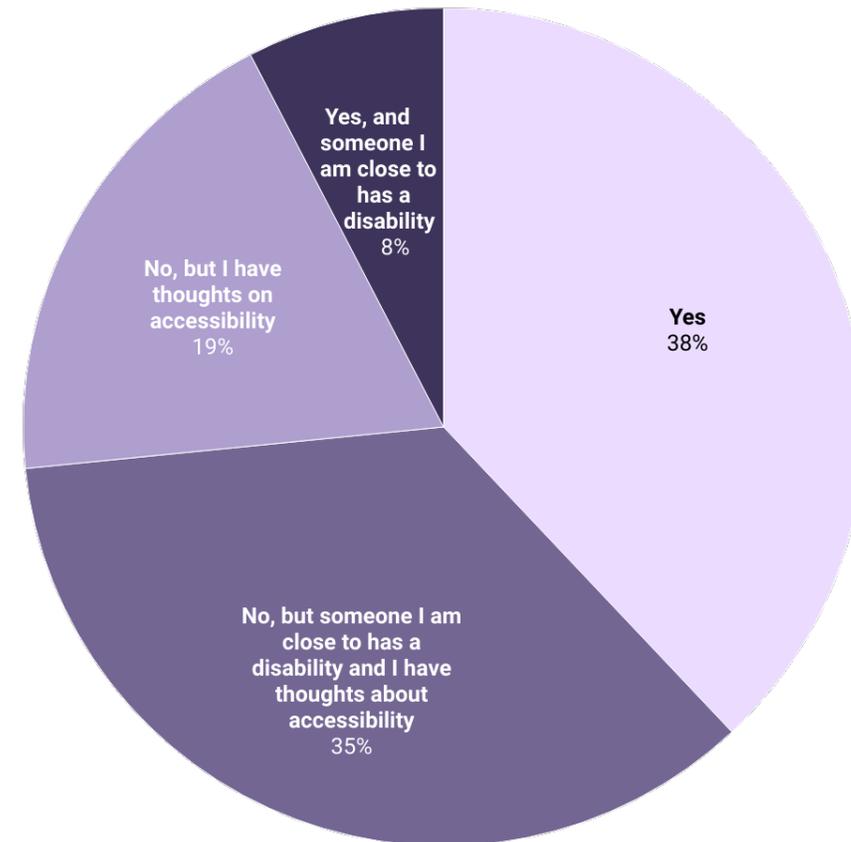
10. What are the top 3 things you would like to see your municipality focus on improving with respect to accessibility?

11. Are there any other thoughts you'd like to share about accessibility in your municipality?

# Appendix 3: Survey Reach Demographics\*

- The public engagement survey had a total of 79 responses (n=79).
- 38% (n=30) of respondents identified as having a disability.
- 8% (n=6) of respondents had a disability and were close to someone with a disability.
- 35% (n=28) of respondents did not have a disability but are close to someone who does.
- 20% (n=15) of respondents did not have a disability but wanted to share their thoughts on accessibility.
- While the overall response rate relative to the Municipalities' population was low, most respondents have a deep connection to the lived experience of disability and accessibility on the Peninsula.

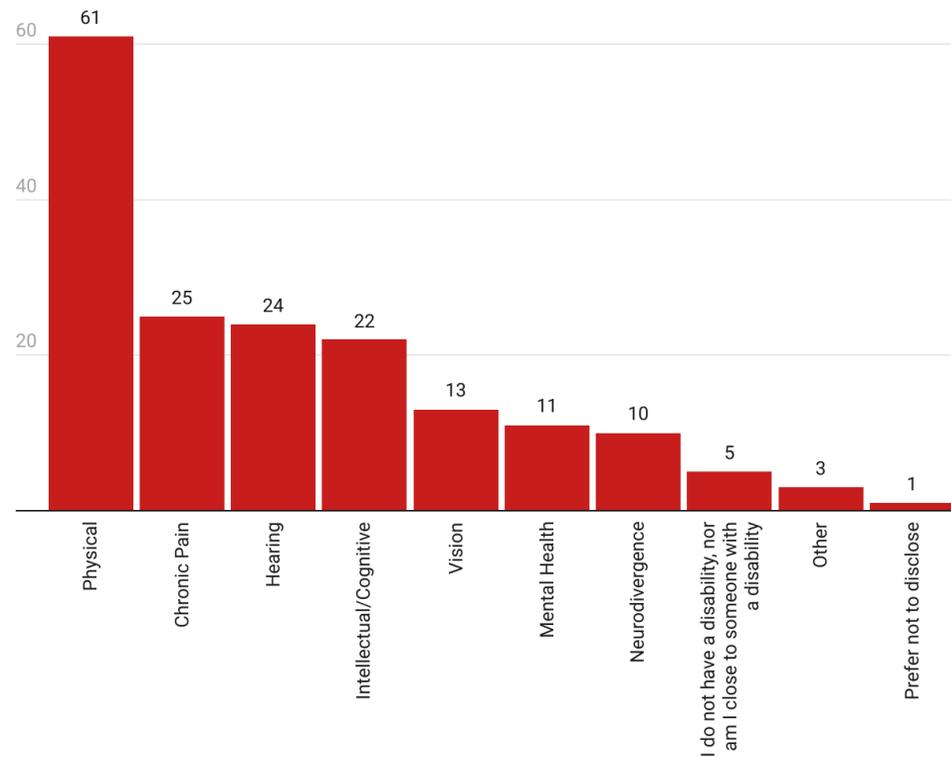
Yes No, but someone I am close to has a disability and I have thoughts about accessibility  
No, but I have thoughts on accessibility Yes, and someone I am close to has a disability



\*Due to the small sample size obtained from this survey the responses obtained cannot be wholly representative of all the Municipalities and the experiences of residents.

# Appendix 3: Disability\*

Which types of disabilities impact you and/or people you are close to?



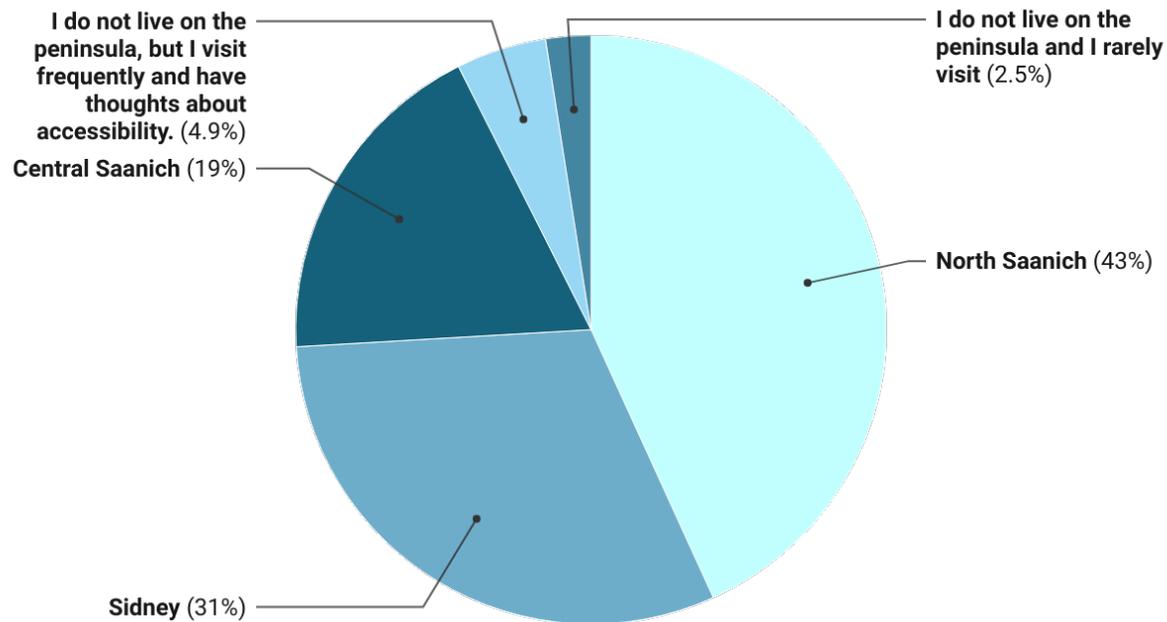
n=79

- Physical disabilities were most highly represented among survey respondents, with 34.6% (n=61) reporting that a physical disability impacted themselves or a close connection. Chronic pain was the second highest report amongst survey respondents at 14.2% (n=25).
- Hearing disabilities were reported by 13.6% (n=24) respondents, cognitive and intellectual disabilities at 12.5% (n=22) of respondents, followed by vision (7.3%, n=13) and mental health (6.25% n=11), and neurodivergence at 5.6% (n=10).
- 0.6% of respondents (n=1) preferred not to disclose their disability.
- 2.3% (n=4) identified with a disability not represented in the list of options.
- 2.8% (n=5) or respondents did not identify as having a disability or being close to someone who does have a disability.

# Appendix 3: Geography And Age\*

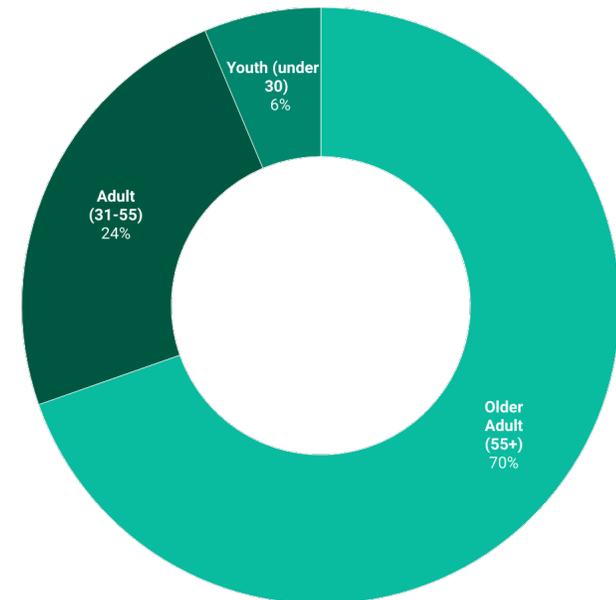
- 43% (n=35) of respondents live in the District of North Saanich; 31% (n=25) live in the Town of Sidney; 19% (n=15) live in the District of Central Saanich; 4.9% (n=4) do not live on the peninsula but visit frequently, and 2.5% (n=2) do not live on the peninsula and rarely visit.

- 70% (n=55) survey respondents were over the age of 55, 24% (n=19) of respondents were between the ages of 31-55, and 6% (n=5) were under 30.
- This age distribution was anticipated as the municipalities all have a larger share of the population in middle and older age groups compared to the rest of the Capital Regional District. Youth participation in the survey was higher than anticipated.



How old are you?

Older Adult (55+) Adult (31-55) Youth (under 30)



# Appendix 4: Public Consultations: Pop-ups and Town Hall

In the interest of “meeting people where they are”, LTRT conducted three pop-up engagements (one in each of the Municipalities) during the week of July 25. These pop-up engagements gave community members the opportunity to learn about the Municipalities’ work on accessibility, to share their feedback on accessibility in their communities, and to take and/or share information about the public survey. Pop-up locations were determined using the knowledge and expertise of The Municipalities project team, with special attention paid to the accessibility of the venues, diversity of demographics, and visibility within the community.

The pop-up engagements were promoted on The Municipalities’ social media platforms, official websites, and community message boards in all three municipalities. Pop-up engagements were conducted at the following locations:

- Beacon & Second Avenue intersection (Town of Sidney)
- Centennial Park Playground (District of Central Saanich)
- North Saanich Farm Market (District of North Saanich)

LTRT also set up a booth at Central Saanich’s Age-Friendly Communities Plan open house. Given the overlap between the needs of aging communities and people with disabilities, there was alignment between the two initiatives.



Accessibility Specialist Kaila Hunte engaging with the Town of Sidney on Beacon Street.

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