



# Richmond Accessibility Plan – Plain Language Summary 2023–2033

This plain-language summary was made available through grant funding provided by the Government of British Columbia and administered by the Disability Alliance British Columbia.

# Helpful Terms to Know

**Accessible:** A barrier-free experience that ensures everyone is able to equitably access, use and benefit from their community.

**Accessibility Lens:** A way to find and describe barriers that people with disabilities face. Staff use this to understand how rules, programs or decisions can harm or help people with disabilities.

**Accommodation:** A change to the built environment, program or equipment that allows a person with a disability to fully participate.

**The Act:** The Accessible British Columbia Act.

**BC Human Rights Code:** A law that protects and promotes human rights.

**Built Environment:** Buildings, parks and other human-made areas that people use. From small parks and buildings to neighbourhoods and large cities.

**The City:** City of Richmond as an organization.

**Cultural:** Describes a shared set of attitudes and values of a group or place.

**Economic:** Describes the creation, sharing and use of goods and services.

**Interdepartmental Accessibility Committee:** A committee of City staff from different departments and the Library. The committee helped create this Plan and will work together to improve accessibility.

**The Library:** Richmond Public Library

**Official Community Plan:** A bylaw with the long-term vision or goal of the community. It has goals and policies to help guide Council decisions.

**The Plan:** City of Richmond Accessibility Plan 2023–2033.

**Physical:** Describes a material object or place that can be sensed.

**Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee:** A committee of up to 12 members who provide advice to City Council on how to improve accessibility.

**Social:** Describes interactions between a person or groups of people.

**Universal Design:** Design that can be accessed, understood and used by all people.

**Wayfinding:** How a person finds and plans their route in the built environment.

## Summary

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* became law in British Columbia on June 17, 2021. It was the first law of its kind in British Columbia to cover accessibility at the provincial level.

The Act required the City of Richmond to

- Set up an accessibility advisory committee;
- Make a multi-year accessibility plan; and
- Set up a way to get feedback on the plan and the city.

The City of Richmond wants to be more accessible. For a long time, the City has worked with the community to find and get rid of barriers to participation in Richmond.

The *Richmond Accessibility Plan 2023–2033* builds on this work. The Plan will help the community and the City make Richmond more accessible over the next ten years.

The City and Library worked together to make the Plan. The Library will also use the Plan to help them improve accessibility.

The goal of the Plan is to:

- Find and fix barriers that make it hard for people with disabilities to use the City and the Library.
- Make Richmond a place where people of all ages, skills and backgrounds can join community life as they wish.
- Make society more accessible and show appreciation for people with disabilities.

The City talked to people with disabilities, their families and caregivers to make the Plan. The City also talked to local groups that support people with disabilities.

To make Richmond more accessible, the City, Library, residents and other community organizations will need to work together to fix the issues people with disabilities face. This will make Richmond a better place for everyone.

## Parts & Actions

The Plan has 6 main parts and 34 suggested actions the City can do. It is Richmond's goal to improve accessibility in the next ten years. The actions will happen throughout the community and will meet the needs of people in the community. The Plan includes parts and actions not covered by other City plans.

The six parts are:

1. An Accessible Community
2. An Inclusive Organization
3. Accessibility in the Built Environment
4. Accessible Programs and Services

## 5. Accessible Communications and Technology

## 6. Research and Monitoring

The Act says the City has to

- Find barriers that people with disabilities face when using City facilities or services;
- Stop and prevent these barriers from happening; and
- Find, remove, and stop any barriers for staff members with disabilities.

The Plan will help improve accessibility in the City's spaces, programs and planning. Departments from across the City will need to work together. Accessibility actions will be included in their department annual work plans. The Library will also improve accessibility in their programs and services.

To follow the Act, the Plan will get updated every three years. The community and Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee will have a say.

The Plan includes actions that are:

- Short-term (0–3 years);
- Medium-term (4–6 years);
- Long-term (7–10 years); and
- Ongoing (now and into the future).

Every three years, the City will update the Plan with new actions.

## **Part 1: An Accessible Community**

Everyone benefits when accessibility is a central part of the community. Everyone should be able to access all the parts of our society, such as:

- physical
- economic
- social

- cultural

All parts of community life should be accessible. Groups, businesses and governments need to work together to make this happen.

When it is easy for people with disabilities to join in the community, they have more choices and control over their lives. They can take part in activities that matter to them. Everyone in a community should have a sense of belonging and feel included.

### **Actions:**

- Consider accessibility in City planning documents, like updates to the Official Community Plan and other City strategies.
- Identify, remove and stop barriers to participating in civic engagement activities. This includes Richmond's elections, City Council meetings, community consultations, committees and Richmond Public Library Board, for example.
- Start new projects to help reduce stigma and raise awareness. Show how the community values what people with disabilities bring to the community.
- Work together with people with disabilities and other groups to improve accessibility. Make sure that practices in the community are similar.
- Find new ways to plan and network. Make it easier for people from different groups to share what works best. This should help make Richmond more accessible.
- Advocate to senior levels of government for resources to help Richmond residents with disabilities.

## **Part 2: An Inclusive Organization**

The City will try to remove barriers at a structural level. It will look at the rules that make up how it works. The City will view them through an accessibility lens. An accessibility lens is a way to find barriers that people

with disabilities face. Staff use this to understand how these rules can harm or help people with disabilities.

Making an organization's structure accessible helps create a fair workplace. It also makes the organization diverse and open to everyone.

Having more accessibility training is important. It makes it easier for staff to know how to make the City more accessible.

### **Actions:**

- Look at City rules with an accessibility lens. Find ways to make the rules free of barriers. Make changes to rules as needed. Some examples are how people can apply for permits and licenses, and the rules that tell the City how it can buy items.
- Set up and run a program to teach staff how to be better at finding, stopping and removing barriers.
- Show that the City wants to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. Make sure the City's corporate culture activities have an accessibility focus.
- Make and use an inclusive employment plan so the workplace better reflects the community as a whole. One part of this should be a review of methods for hiring and recruiting.
- Raise awareness of the BC Human Rights Code. Employers must make accommodations or tools available to people with disabilities when required.

## **Part 3: Accessibility in the Built Environment**

The City can use universal design principles to plan, build and improve our spaces. Universal design is when something can be accessed, understood and used by all people. This makes it easier for everyone to take part in activities, make friends and live an active life.



The City's Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines are a set of rules that make City buildings more accessible. Universal design will make the built environment easier for staff and other users.

### **Actions:**

- Plan repairs and upgrades to City facilities with accessibility in mind.
- Check the City's building standards, plans and rules to find ways to improve accessibility in the built environment. Examples include the City's Engineering Drafting and Design Standards, Parks and Open Space Strategy and Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines and Technical Specifications.
- Update the City's Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines. Look for ways to use these guidelines in more parts of the City's built environment. Plazas, community gardens and sensory-friendly areas are some examples.
- Use technology and best practices in universal design to make wayfinding systems in Richmond more inclusive. This will make it easier for people to get around.
- Add more ways for people to get around the community. These should include routes to and from City buildings, parks and open areas.
- Create ways to keep access while the built environment is being changed. For example, let people know about safe alternate routes.
- Find ways to fix barriers in the built environment that people with disabilities face during really bad weather. For example, floods, very hot weather and snow.

## **Part 4: Accessible Programs and Services**

Accessible programs and services mean more people with disabilities can take part. If programs and services are barrier-free to begin with, then people won't need as many accommodations later on. There are new and changing ways to make programs and services accessible. These new ways

can help the growing number of people with disabilities in Richmond participate more in programs and services.

The City needs to work with people with disabilities and community groups. They should do this to make new, low-barrier programs and services.

**Actions:**

- Look at programs and services with an accessibility lens. Find ways to improve access and participation for people with disabilities. For example, try new ways of delivering services.
- Look at community-based data and best practices. Get more people with disabilities involved in making new programs and services. Meet the needs of people with disabilities in Richmond.
- Look into new ways to make it easier for people with disabilities to get the services and programs that can help them.
- Make it easier for people with disabilities to volunteer. Make it easier to support volunteers with disabilities.

## **Part 5: Accessible Communications and Technology**

Technology keeps getting better. It changes how people with disabilities get information and join in the community.

Information should come in many forms, including non-digital. People with disabilities should be able to find programs and services to fit their needs. Information needs to be accessible.

**Actions:**

- Make it easier for people with disabilities to get information. Review the City's corporate communications and marketing standards, like the Editorial Style Guide and Graphic Standards Manual.
- Create rules to make sure that everyone can access the City's emergency and time-sensitive information.

- Make it easier for people to get information on the City and Library websites. Follow updated standards for accessibility.
- Check tools like LetsTalkRichmond.ca and the MyRichmond app for accessibility barriers. Look into ways to make the tools more in line with updated accessibility standards.
- Make tools, resources and standards for staff to help improve accessible communication. Make sure everyone can get information and learn more about projects and opportunities in the community.

## **Part 6: Research and Monitoring**

The City needs to stay up-to-date about the barriers that affect people with disabilities. The City also needs to learn about new ideas to make accessibility better.

The City will improve the Plan's actions every three years by using feedback from the public and staff, as the Act requires. This means the Plan will fit the changing needs of people with disabilities in Richmond.

It is also important to stay up-to-date on the latest accessibility rules and laws. This will help put the Plan into action and will make Richmond more accessible.

### **Actions:**

- Create a community data profile to help all City staff learn about accessibility trends.
- Keep working with the Interdepartmental Accessibility Committee and the Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee. Watch how the Plan is being put into action. Report on progress every two years.
- Revise the Plan every three years based on what the Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee and residents say.
- Help put the Plan into action and meet the new standards set by the Act.

- Put steps in each city department's annual work plan to help staff fulfill the actions in the Plan.
- Find ways for Richmond to adopt best practices, standards, and new tools for accessibility.
- Research and apply for funds that will help start new projects that make Richmond more accessible and meet the requirements of the Act.

## Conclusion

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* will improve accessibility and inclusion. The Act tells groups, like cities, that they need to remove accessibility barriers. The City is working to make places easier for everyone in the community to get to. The City is also working to make everyone feel welcome in these places.

The *Richmond Accessibility Plan 2023–2033* is a ten-year plan. It shows how Richmond wants to make the community more accessible and equal. The Plan says how to find, remove and stop barriers in the community. It also encourages the City to talk to people with disabilities and those who support people with disabilities.

It will be very important for the City to work together with people with disabilities to do the actions in its Plan. It will also need to work with other groups, such as:

- Richmond Public Library
- Richmond Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Community Associations and Societies
- community organizations
- public sector agencies
- businesses
- the Government of BC and the Government of Canada

- family and caregivers of people with disabilities

By working together, the City can improve access for people with disabilities, now and in the future.

Accessibility makes life better for everyone. When people have more freedom and choice in their community, they can become more involved. Learning from people with disabilities can help make Richmond more enjoyable for everyone.