



WEST VANCOUVER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Accessibility Plan

2024-2025

Land Acknowledgment

The West Vancouver Memorial Library operates on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), sə́ilwətaʔt (Tseil-Waututh Nation), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam Nation). We recognize and respect them as Nations in this territory, as well as their connection to the lands and waters around us since time immemorial.



Prepared for:

West Vancouver Memorial Library
1950 Marine Drive
West Vancouver, B.C., V7V 1J8

The WVML Accessibility Plan works within the common framework established by the 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan of the District of West Vancouver. The WVML Accessibility Plan provides context and action items that are specific to the Library. Some section numbering may differ, and the term of our plan also differs, covering only 2024.

Key contributors include Andrea Davidson (lead writer), the WVML EDI Steering Committee, the Accessible Services Team, and the patrons and staff who provide ongoing accessibility feedback.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WEST VANCOUVER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

The West Vancouver Memorial Library, which opened in 1950, is one of the busiest libraries in B.C. According to the 2021 Census, 44,122 people live in the District of West Vancouver (Statistics Canada, “Focus on Geography” 1). The Library also regularly serves residents throughout the lower mainland, international students, and visitors from abroad. In the first six months of 2023, the Library had more than 450,000 in-person and virtual visits (Hall, “Director’s Midyear Report” 3).

The Library offers extensive collections in multiple languages and formats, along with high service levels and popular programs. The community’s average age is older than the provincial average and includes substantial communities of Mandarin and Farsi speaking residents.

For more than 55 years, the Library has offered home delivery services for patrons who have trouble getting to the Library independently (Wild and Long 16). Currently, our Library has a team dedicated to serving patrons with accessibility challenges: Accessible Services.

Our Accessible Services Team works tirelessly to offer rich and engaging collections, popular programs including Talking Books, and home delivery services. In 2022 alone, there were 1,437 care home deliveries (Hall, “2022 Impact Report” 10). Over the years, many patrons and their families have expressed their gratitude for these services. One of our home delivery patrons said, “This service is my life-line to the outside world” (Enjo). Another patron has called our Accessible Services staff her “Library angels” (Enjo).

1.2 ACCESSIBILITY AND LIBRARIES

Accessibility is about ensuring every person has an equal opportunity to timely access, use and enjoyment of library services, programs, and collections (Library Board Policy Manual 1-8). Improving the accessibility of libraries requires balancing everyone’s needs and unique circumstances because design elements that facilitate accessibility for some people may be a barrier for others. For example, smooth floors can help wheelchair users navigate library spaces but they can be an obstacle for patrons with vision impairments who rely on tactile markings to get around (Cheng 2).

Libraries have a fundamental responsibility to equitably serve all members of our communities (“Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries” 1).

Libraries are uniquely placed to play a “transformational role in helping facilitate more complete participation in society by providing fully accessible resources and services” (“Services to People with Disabilities” 1).

In 2021, our Library received the W. K. Lamb Award, a national award presented every two years to libraries that offer innovative and excellent services for seniors (Barton-Bridges 1). This award recognized the efforts of our Accessible Services Team to expand the accessibility of our services and programs. One such program was the Dial-a-Story: Indigenous Storytelling by Squamish Elders, presented in partnership with the Squamish Nation Elders Centre. This program only required a telephone to participate and allowed isolated members of our community to listen to engaging stories without having to leave their home. The program also gave Squamish Elders an opportunity to share their stories and connect with other members of the North Shore community. This program was incredibly popular and reached more than 230 library patrons (Barton-Bridges 1).

Libraries have a role to play in the implementation of the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Our Library is committed to upholding Article 22(1), which urges organizations to pay “particular attention...to the rights and special needs of [*Indigenous*] elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration” (United Nations (General Assembly), pp.art. 22(1)).

1.3 WHAT ARE DISABILITIES? AN OVERVIEW

A disability is the “inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier” (Government of British Columbia).

Impairments can be related to pain, memory, mobility, cognition, learning, language, senses, chronic health conditions and other issues that place limitations on aspects of daily life.

Barriers include attitudes, built environments, technologies, forms of communication, and system-wide policies or practices that prevent a person from fully and equitably participating in society. The District’s Plan includes more general information about disabilities, and definitions and examples of each type of barrier on page 4.

In 2017, a Canadian survey on disability estimated that an average of 22% of Canadians aged 15 and older are living with one or more disability (“Canadian Survey on Disability” 1). If you look a little closer, the percentage increases from 13% for

people aged 15-24, to 20% for people aged 25-64, and up to 38% for people 65 and older (Statistics Canada, “Canadian Survey on Disability” 1). Researchers have also found that approximately 30-35% of Indigenous people in Canada live with one or more disability (Okonkwo 1).

Responses to the 2016 Census long-form questionnaire revealed that 13.5% of children aged 0-14 have difficulty with one or more activity of daily life due to a physical, cognitive or other health-related condition (Charters et. al. 1). Activities of daily life refers to fundamental self-care skills such as bathing, getting dressed, and shopping for groceries.

In British Columbia, over 926,000 people live with one or more disability. According to data available in the 2016 Canadian Census (the most recent community level data available), 25% of West Vancouver residents reported having difficulty with one or more activity of daily life due to a physical, cognitive or other health-related condition (District of West Vancouver 6).

For more information about disability among individuals living in West Vancouver, please see the Community Profile section in the District Plan.

1.4 MYTHS ABOUT DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Our values – inclusion, integrity, community, and learning – will guide our efforts to make our Library spaces, services and collections more accessible (2023 Strategic Framework 1).

Before outlining the details of our first Accessibility Plan, we want to establish a shared understanding of disability and accessibility. To accomplish this goal, we need to dispel four popular myths about disability and accessibility.

Myth #1: People with disabilities are all the same.

Everyone with an impairment or disability is unique (Government of Canada 3).

Even people with the same type of impairment may encounter barriers in different ways. The different aspects of a person’s identity, such as age, gender, race, citizenship and socio-economic status, can amplify the impact a barrier can have on an individual. For example, a refugee with impaired sight may find it more difficult to access downloadable audiobooks than a Canadian citizen with impaired sight.

Disability can happen to anyone at any age. Our Accessible Services patrons range in age from 4 to more than 100 years old. Our Youth department has also helped patrons with disabilities from newborn babies, through the early years (ages 1-5) to kids (ages 6-12) and teens (ages 13-19).

Impairments can have a mild, moderate or severe impact on a person's ability to participate in daily life. The severity of impairments and individual experiences can also fluctuate over time.

Certain impairments such as mobility limitations can be easier to understand because we can see them. These kinds of impairments are sometimes called 'visible disabilities'. Other impairments including difficulties with memory may be harder to understand but they are no less real and the people experiencing them are no less worthy of respect or dignity. These kinds of impairments are sometimes called 'invisible disabilities'. We need to be aware that some members of our community find this term problematic because it makes them feel less seen and less valued than people with 'visible disabilities'. When in doubt, ask a patron or colleague for their preferred term.

Myth #2 Accessibility only matters for people with disabilities.

Policies that address the accessibility of spaces, programs and information enhance usability for everyone – not just for people with disabilities. For instance, common tools such as speech-to-text might have been initially developed for people with disabilities but are now widely used by Canadians with or without disabilities (University of Northern Carolina 3).

In 2020, our Accessible Services Team introduced our pastime kits and simple music players, which are designed to help people living with dementia and their caregivers stay active and engaged. These collections were curated to support patrons with cognitive challenges but they have been very popular across our community.

Myth #3 There is already lots of readily available accessible content.

Less than 5% of books are available in any alternate format such as braille or DAISY discs, which stands for Digital Accessible Information System (Creedy et. al.1). International publishing companies also charge public libraries exorbitant prices for downloadable audiobooks. For example, it is not uncommon for libraries to have to pay upwards of \$120 for a temporary license for one downloadable audiobook ("Position Statement on E-Books" 2).

Myth #4 Accessibility is someone else's responsibility.

Accessibility is **everyone's** responsibility. Creating accessible in-person and virtual

experiences for every member of our community is essential because everyone should have the opportunity to connect with ideas, the world of imagination, and each other (2023 Strategic Framework 1). This responsibility is shared by the Library Board, Library Director, senior management, staff, Friends of the Library and Library partners.

Join us in making our community more inclusive!

1.5 OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

Our Library has a long history of working to make library spaces, communication materials, collections, and programs accessible for all.

1. Library Spaces

We have installed hearing loops in our Welsh Hall meeting room system, and funding has been secured to build an outdoor elevator to our rooftop garden to make this popular space more accessible. Patrons have also expressed gratitude for our virtual programming and accessibility options such as closed captioning.

2. Communications

The ReachDeck screen reader is available on our website. Image descriptions are embedded in our digital communications. In our print materials, we use high-contrast colour and large font sizes to make them accessible for patrons with vision impairments. When possible, the Library translates brochures and other library materials into Farsi, Mandarin and other languages that are commonly spoken in our community.

3. Collections

The Library has a strong collection of Talking Books, and a growing selection of ebooks and downloadable audiobooks. Our large print collection includes the most current and critically acclaimed titles across all genres of fiction and non-fiction. The Library is a member of the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) and the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA), both of which expand the offerings available to our Accessible Services patrons. In particular, CELA has a broad selection of new Canadian and book club titles.

The Accessible Services Team has researched and purchased resources for people experiencing cognitive challenges including simple music players, light therapy lamps and pastime kits.

The Library also recently introduced the Brain Health Collection. This is a series of 19 activities, games, and tools that foster social engagement and cognitive stimulation. While these collections have been curated to support caregivers and people living with neurocognitive disorders (such as strokes, dementia, or Huntington's), they are available for everyone.

4. Programs and Services

Our Accessible Services Team recently launched a new program: the Library Bound Tea Social. This monthly program offers free transportation to and from the library for patrons who cannot get to the library independently and gives isolated patrons a chance to make new friends. Our Accessible Services Team offers excellent readers' advisory and home delivery services. They also organize pop up libraries at locations including Libby Lodge and the Squamish Nation Elders Centre to serve patrons unable to visit the library due to a variety of barriers.

We recognize that despite our best efforts, people with disabilities still face many challenges when trying to access information and participate fully in our community. Articles 19, 21, 27 and 30 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, pp.art.19, 21, 27 and 30) state that persons with disabilities have a fundamental right to feel included in their community, work in accessible built environments, and access to information and leisure materials.

1.6 THE ACCESSIBLE BRITISH COLUMBIA ACT

In 2021, the B.C. Government passed the *Accessible British Columbia Act* (the Act), which requires organizations, including libraries, to prepare a formal plan that outlines how they intend to prevent, identify, and remove barriers to accessing facilities, programs, and services.

To comply with the Act, the Library must satisfy three requirements:

1. Establish an accessibility committee

Along with the three North Shore Municipalities and the North Shore Libraries, WVML has an existing relationship with the North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues ([NS ACDI](#)). This committee makes recommendations and provides advice on matters affecting people with disabilities on the North Shore. This committee is the official accessibility committee for the Library.

Additionally, public libraries in the Metro Vancouver and Sea to Sky region collaborate via their Federation which is known as Public Library InterLINK. This body is creating an Accessibility Advisory Committee, which will make recommendations on a range of initiatives that can make public libraries more accessible and inclusive. Our Library will consult with this committee for library-sector specific guidance. More information about this committee can be found here: <https://www.interlinklibraries.ca/services/accessibility/>

Our Library also has an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee (EDI Steering Committee). This internal committee engages in EDI planning and its mandate includes addressing systemic and attitudinal barriers to serving our diverse community.

This committee is made up of staff and management that come from different departments (Technology, Circulation, Customer and Community Experience) and who have a wide range of lived experiences. The committee currently includes both permanent and casual employees, and at least one staff member who lives with disabilities.

Participating in all three committees will help the Library capture community needs and identify potential solutions from different lenses.

2. Create an Accessibility Plan

This document is the Library's first Accessibility Plan. This plan covers 2023-2024 and is designed to be used in concert with the District's Plan. The purpose of this plan is to provide a formal roadmap for improving the accessibility of our Library for both staff and patrons.

3. Develop a mechanism for receiving feedback from the public on accessibility issues

The Library has several mechanisms for capturing public feedback including:

- orally by speaking with library staff at any of our three public service desks;
- in writing, patron comment cards are near the library's main entrance or patrons can mail a letter to the library: 1950 Marine Drive, West Vancouver, B.C., VYV 1J8;
- email: info@westvanlibrary.ca;
- telephone: 604.925.7403;

- in community during outreach events or while offering home delivery services, and;
- in periodic public surveys.

The Library will use these tools to capture and track accessibility feedback. The Library's next general community survey is planned for 2024 and it will include questions on accessibility.

The EDI Steering Committee will review the accessibility feedback received by the Library, and work collaboratively with the Accessible Services Team to research potential solutions and identify action items for future Accessibility Plans.

2.0 ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN

The District's Accessibility Plan, which was approved by Council on October 24, 2023, serves as the foundation for the Library's Accessibility Plan.

The following is a short summary of the [District's Plan](#), and how it is connected with the Library's Plan.

The District used seven guiding principles to inform its plan: Inclusion, Adaptability, Diversity, Collaboration, Self-Determination, Universal Design, and Intersectionality.

The District also identified six priority areas for taking action:

1. Fostering Inclusive Attitudes and Addressing Ableism
2. Removing and Preventing Barriers Proactively
3. Supporting Accessible Communications and Engagement Practices
4. Encouraging a Connected, Navigable Community
5. Promoting Inclusive and Diverse Employment Environment
6. Enabling and Prioritizing Accessibility

Figure 1 on page 11 of the District's Plan has a visual representation of these priority areas and how they are designed to address six primary types of accessibility barriers: systemic, attitudinal, physical, sensory, technological, and communications.

The District identified 28 specific actions it will take to advance accessibility in our community over the next three years. These actions are grouped together under the six priority areas.

The Library decided to group our action items under the same six priority areas to ensure West Vancouver takes a coordinated approach to removing and preventing barriers to accessibility.

For sector-specific goals such as increasing the availability of large print materials in other languages, the Library will work closely with InterLINK and CELA to advance these initiatives.

The following sections identify ways the Library can support District's actions and outlines specific self-initiated actions the Library will prioritize in 2024. Capacity can fluctuate and urgent priorities can emerge, so the Library's 2024 Accessibility Plan is considered a living document. A new version of the plan will be created in late 2024 to reflect priorities for 2025-6.

2.1 FOSTERING INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES AND ADDRESSING ABLEISM

GOAL: Foster a culture of accessibility and inclusion for employees, volunteers, and the community to break down attitudinal barriers.

District Led Action	Library Support Action	Library Led Action
Explore continuing education and training opportunities for District employees on ableism and working with people with visible and invisible disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and share ideas. - Ensure library staff are aware of education opportunities provided by the District. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host a mandatory baseline training for all staff paired with an assessment of our knowledge gaps (2024). - Promote opportunities to learn or lead sessions at BCLA / library continuing education partners.
Consider where education and awareness of invisible, non-speaking, and neurodiverse barriers for District employees can increase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and share ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider implementing a self-directed employee learning hub (potentially partner with District). - Identify training materials on working respectfully with people with disabilities to include in the orientation of new employees. - Include accessibility and ableism as factors in the 2023/24 EDI consultation
Facilitate public education and information on accessibility, [the Act]/ABCA relevant and most up-to-date information related to accessibility and the importance of this work, through a dedicated webpage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and share ideas. - Offer the Library as a key public education programming agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to offer education and awareness programming. - Incorporate the seven guiding Accessibility principles into the Library's Equity Statement (2024).
Seek opportunities to collaborate and partner with local groups and lived experience experts in offering learning and educational opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and participate in shared District or North Shore tables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue existing outreach and partnership efforts. - Participate in InterLink's Accessibility Advisory Committee and learn best practices.

2.2 REMOVING AND PREVENTING BARRIERS PROACTIVELY

GOAL: Improve public realm and built environment adaptability through universal design to support equitable access for all and enhanced end-user experience.

District Led Action	Library Support Action	Library Led Action
Support employee development goals, ongoing professional development, and career advancements in effectively applying best practices in universal design and design for all concepts through employee training and development programs, such as tuition reimbursement.	- Participate in District initiatives.	- Promote awareness of District and external professional development opportunities for library staff using multiple communication channels.
Beginning with the highest community value projects reflect and work with best practice standards (e.g., British Columbia Building Code, CSA/ASC B651, or similar as they evolve), with checklists for common projects that can be shared interdepartmentally (e.g. sidewalks, accessible furniture, bike lanes, curb cuts etc.) for use across the North Shore.	- Participate in District initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete installation of an accessible lift to the Swáywi Temíxw Rooftop garden. - Move the public service desk on the main floor closer to the entrance. - Install a height-adjustable patron computing station. - Troubleshoot the signage for the universal single-stall washroom locking devices to improve accessibility.
Create an inventory of sidewalks that includes a matrix/map for internal use in determining where improvements are needed, resources directed, and funds allocated.	- Participate in District initiatives.	
Determine an auditing framework for civic building though support from established disability	- Participate in District initiatives.	- Conduct Library accessibility review in 2024 (e.g. Rick Hansen Foundation). Can include public/staff areas,

<p>auditing organizations to identify existing physical, sensory, information/communication, and technological barriers that affect universal accessibility, which includes both public and staff areas. Utilize findings to support capital works projects and budgets.</p>		<p>indoor/outdoor spaces, physical, cognitive, sensory, information/communication and technological barriers that affect universal accessibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate facility evacuation procedures with an accessibility lens and ensure staff are trained on any updated procedures.
<p>Continue to engage with key accessibility stakeholder(s) reviewing and developing policies and bylaws related to the District, West Vancouver Memorial Library, and West Vancouver Police Department.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to engage with key accessibility stakeholder(s).
<p>Continue to engage with key accessibility stakeholder(s) on prioritized projects (assessed by high-usage priority areas and community benefit).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in District initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare a plan for exploring Accessible Services future space, service delivery, and programming needs.

2.3 SUPPORTING ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

GOAL: Continue to advance the District’s public communication interfaces to meet the needs of an entire community, ensuring that all residents have equitable access to collaborate, participate and engage in civic responsibility.

District Led Action	Library Support Action	Library Led Action
Create an internal accessibility directory that includes guidelines such as respectful, person-first language or identity-first language, neurodiversity terms and definitions, accessible materials, etc., that can be utilized (where applicable) in accommodating accessible engagement, public-facing events, and materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and share knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote awareness of District materials. - Include support materials for accessibility tools in learning hub mentioned in 2.1 (e.g. hearing loops). - Offer a staff training session (pop lab) on accessibility tools.
Continue to advance District websites towards meeting the latest web content accessibility guidelines / standards, including automatic audits and reporting software.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and share knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate best practices into the Library’s website as capacity allows.
Establish an internal communications guidelines to promote the advantages of universal design and design for all in capital projects and build environment retrofits or designs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and share knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate best practices into the Library’s Editorial Style Guide and other communications guidelines as and when appropriate.
Create a feedback mechanism that enables community to report accessibility challenges related to facilities, services, programs, and public spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and share knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use existing communication channels to collect accessibility feedback. This feedback will be collated and reviewed quarterly by the EDI Steering Committee. This committee can make

		<p>recommendations for unresolved items, including identifying potential priorities for future Accessibility Plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Invite community and disability-advocacy organizations that work with the Library and the Accessible Services Team to report accessibility gaps in services, collections, and programs via email.
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2.4 ENCOURAGING A CONNECTED, NAVIGABLE COMMUNITY

GOAL: Promote self-determination to enable people with visible and invisible disabilities to access their community, interact with others, travel across it, and have the information they need to navigate it.

District Led Action	Library Support Action	Library Led Action
Develop a public and interactive accessibility web map to present searchable information about District accessibility (e.g., amenities, active transportation routes, parking etc.).	- Participate in District initiatives.	
Map assets and deficits in accessibility – sidewalks, trails, parks, curb ramps, accessible parking spots – as part of internal assessments of ongoing maintenance and development.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to track assets and deficits. - Identify priority areas that can either be addressed in the short term or added to longer term planning.
Include facilities accessibility information on applicable web pages.		- Continue to provide this information.
Include program and service accessibility information on applicable web pages.		- Continue to provide this information.

2.5 PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE EMPLOYMENT ENVIRONMENT

GOAL: Expand accessible employment procedures to reflect the diversity of people with disabilities in West Vancouver.

District Led Action	Library Support Action	Library Led Action
Review where hiring practices and procedures can be expanded to reach disabled applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the District's efforts to implement EDI recruitment strategies. - Participate and share info. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review examples of employee EDI benchmark surveys for a potential future WVML employee benchmark survey to understand workforce composition. - Review the British Columbia Library Association's <i>EDI Strategies in Recruitment Toolkit</i> and identify 2 or 3 strategies the Library can put in place to support applicants with disabilities.
Seek to understand and continue providing accommodation support for internal staff and volunteers who have an invisible or visible disability, an injury, and/or a medical condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate and share info. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to explore and adopt adaptive technologies. - Include accessibility questions in future internal and external surveys. - Request the District's expertise on best practices to support career advancement of employees with disabilities.
Continue to include and provide training to District employees at various stages of employment that includes all disabilities through the respectful workplace policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate and share info. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide inclusive hiring practices training for hiring managers and supervisors (2024).
Explore how to incorporate accessibility features into the request for proposal template criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate and share info. 	

2.6 ENABLING AND PRIORITIZING ACCESSIBILITY

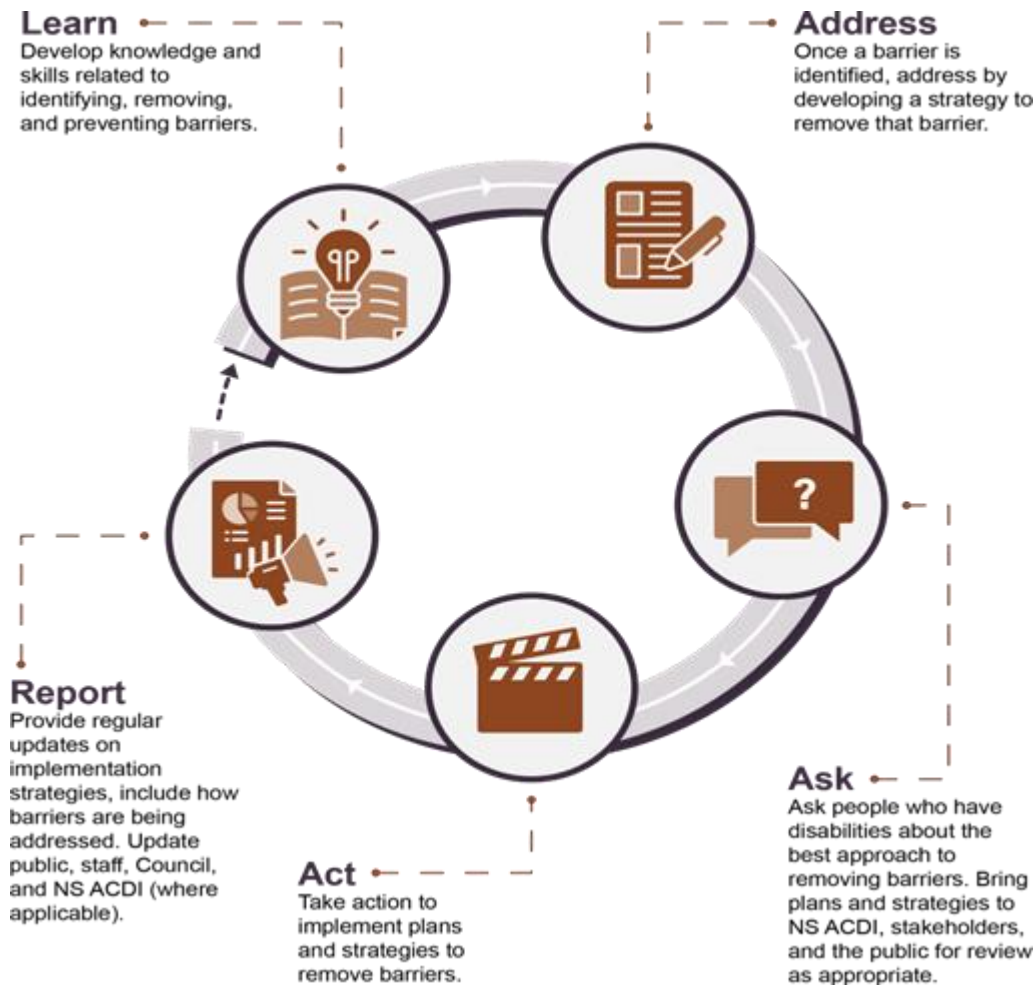
GOAL: Establish systems to include accessibility from the beginning, promote associated community benefits, and celebrate advances towards improved accessibility.

District Led Action	Library Support Action	Library Led Action
Convene the inter-department staff group to meet bi-annually, at minimum to ensure accessibility is regularly discussed, progress assessed, and best practices are shared across departments.	- Participate and share info.	
Integrate the importance of accessibility into public projects/works and identify and communicate what accessibility approaches were applied into these public projects/works.	- Participate and share info.	
Seek to use grant opportunities, partner-organization collaboration, and shared resources to implement action items.	- Participate and share info.	- Explore library specific opportunities.
Explore the intentional allocation of financial resources to implement accessibility-related projects and initiatives.	- Participate and share info.	- Explore funding needs for accessibility-related projects in the Library.
As appropriate and relevant, update actions and respond to forthcoming provincial legislative standards and requirements.		- Update existing policies and documentation as needed.
Ensure monitoring and evaluation are ongoing to assess progress toward becoming a more inclusive, welcoming, and accessible community for all individuals.		- Include the EDI Steering Committee in monitoring progress on action items and providing input into reporting. - Include a summary of progress in the Director's Q2 Report and the annual Library Impact Report.

3.0 IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The District has adopted a five-step implementation approach: Learn-Address-Ask-Act-Report-Repeat. This sequential approach allows organizations to build on existing efforts to enhance the accessibility of our programs, services and collections. For example, when the Library shares the progress we have made towards achieving our goals in step 5, this data will inform our next cycle of growth — step 1. This ongoing feedback loop recognizes that increasing the inclusivity of our community is an ongoing journey.

The Journey of Implementation (District of West Vancouver 17)



3.1 LEARN

“The capacity to learn is a gift; the ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice.” – Brian Herbert (Du Plessis 38).

If you want people with disabilities to feel seen and valued, you need to unlearn harmful stereotypes, become familiar with their varied life experiences, and prioritize their needs when designing programs and services.

The Library will work collaboratively with the District to develop essential knowledge and skills related to accessibility. Specifically, learning how to identify, address, and remove barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in our community.

Education can cover many topics but may include:

- Unconscious biases and assumptions; and
- Staff training on how to help patrons use accessibility tools (e.g. ReachDeck Toolbar).

3.2 ADDRESS

Once the Library is aware of an accessibility barrier, we will work to address it in either our current or future Accessibility Plans. Library staff can use a variety of strategies to address barriers including revising policies, modifying existing services, or developing new collections that empower patrons with disabilities.

3.3 ASK

To ensure a plan to address a barrier is sound, the Library will ask for feedback from patrons and staff with disabilities, disability-service organizations, and/or advisory committees. The level of engagement will depend on the nature and scope of the library program, service, collection or proposed renovation of library space(s). However, it could include bringing a project to one of the library’s advisory committees, conducting an in-house or public survey, or hiring an external consultant.

3.4 ACT

Taking small but concrete steps to improve the accessibility of our Library is the only way to bring about substantive and transformative change. Actions include anything that helps to prevent or remove barriers for those accessing library services.

3.5 REPORT

Being transparent about what is happening at the Library is important for accountability. The Library will share action items that have been completed, action items that are in progress and action items that will need to be addressed in future Accessibility Plans. Where applicable, reports may go to the Library Board, Accessible Services Team, EDI Steering Committee, senior management, other library departments and/or the public.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

“Accessibility is an ongoing journey” – not a destination (“AccessibleBC” 19). Our Accessibility Plan will evolve over time as new best practices emerge, the needs of our patrons with disabilities change, and as new provincial accessibility standards come into effect.

We will help create a more inclusive British Columbia by embracing the spirit of “nothing about us, without us” (“Developing Your First Accessibility Plan” 6). We will work to centre the voices and lived experiences of people with disabilities in the development of library programs, acquisition of library materials, and redesign of physical and virtual library spaces.

We will coordinate with the District to provide staff with education and training opportunities to learn best practices for working with people with disabilities.

Additionally, we will collaborate where possible with public libraries throughout the province, service organizations like Disability Alliance BC, and community partners to offer people with disabilities a rich variety of opportunities for learning and connection.

4.1 SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

We want to hear from you! We welcome feedback on our first Accessibility Plan and accessibility in general. You can provide your suggestions and ideas in several ways:

By phone: 604.925.7403

By email: info@westvanlibrary.ca

By mail: 1950 Marine Drive, West Vancouver, B.C., V7V 1J8

In person: Visit any of our public service desks, share your thoughts with our staff members and/or fill out a patron comment card.

5.0 APPENDICES

5.1 APPENDIX 1: OVERVIEW OF THE *ACCESSIBLE BRITISH COLUMBIA ACT*

- The [Act](#) defines disability: “**disability**” means an inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier” [s.1].
- The Act became law on June 17, 2021 (Except for sections 21-27 not yet in force).
- On September 1, 2022, the provincial government passed a regulation, *Accessible British Columbia Regulation* B.C. Reg. 105/2022, that required 750+ public sector organizations, including public libraries, to satisfy three requirements: establish an accessibility committee, develop an accessibility plan, and build a tool to received feedback on accessibility. The Library has satisfied all three requirements.
- The Act currently has no other deadlines – work to comply is an ongoing priority.
- Organizations and members of the public can give feedback on the Act and its implementation by sending an email to accessibility@gov.bc.ca or contacting the [B.C. Provincial Accessibility Committee](#).
- An independent review of the Act will occur in 2027, 2032 and then every 10 years.
- An overview of the Act is also available in [American Sign Language \(ASL\)](#).
- Note: the Act is current to October 18, 2023, and this overview is current as of October 27, 2023.

5.2 APPENDIX B: WVML 2023 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Figure 2 – Page one of WVML’s 2023 Strategic Framework



Figure 3 – Page two of WVML’s 2023 Strategic Framework



VALUES Our values prioritize our work.

INCLUSION

Our Library's mandate is to support everyone in our community through our services. We actively work to:

- Create equity of access and a safe space for all as a baseline for our services
- Celebrate diversity and a respectful exchange of diverse ideas
- Connect with underserved and marginalized communities, and address systemic barriers to Library participation
- Help people develop as active and engaged citizens of our community and the world
- Inspire a feeling of belonging for all in the Library's spaces, whether physical or virtual
- Develop an inclusive workplace where diverse staff can thrive

A LEARNING CULTURE

We will foster the joy of learning and growth, both in our community and within our staff. To do so, we:

- Help people of all ages learn and grow, at home, school, and work
- Support staff learning and growth
- Help people develop their own creative voices
- Continue to emphasize
 - The love of reading and the world of imagination
 - Developing digital skills
 - Joy and playful ways of learning
 - Appreciation of art and music

INTEGRITY

We maintain a high standard of integrity and quality in our practices and services, including:

- Excellence in our service offerings
- Honouring reconciliation
- Environmental sustainability
- Honesty and trust
- Providing information that is credible and trustworthy
- Fiscal accountability
- Being a responsible employer

COMMUNITY

Community needs are at the centre of all we do. We tailor our services and spaces to those needs through:

- An evidence-based approach and community engagement
- Empathy and caring
- A willingness to innovate and be nimble and responsive
- Meaningful community partnerships
- Supporting community resilience, including economic resilience and social well-being
- Fostering a sense of community and organizational pride among our staff

5.3 APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Purpose of this glossary

This glossary is designed to provide library staff, management and library partners with the tools they need to identify and remove barriers that prevent some members of our community from accessing library spaces, programs, services and collections. This glossary can be also used as a springboard for brave conversations about best practices for accessibility in the workplace.

Disclaimer: This glossary is not an exhaustive list of all the terms used in discussions about accessibility. The meaning of these concepts may vary depending on the context and will evolve over time. In keeping with the recommendations of the Disability Alliance of BC, we have made an intentional decision to use both person-first and identity-first language in this glossary to reflect the diversity in the disability community.

The A to Z of Accessibility

Ableism: A type of discrimination or prejudice against people with disabilities (e.g. cognitive physical, etc.) based on the false belief that people with disabilities are less worthy than able-bodied people. Ableism assumes that people with disabilities need to be ‘cured’ or become more able to fully participate in society (Calgary Anti-Racism Education Collective 1).

Accessibility: Accessibility is about making sure each person has equal opportunity to access, use and benefit from library services, programs and collections with the same quality and timeliness that others receive (Library Board Policy Manual 11).

Ally: A person with privilege who works closely with a marginalized individual or group that is fighting discrimination. Allies take action by beginning a life-long journey of self-reflection and hard work to unlearn unconscious biases and assumptions (Szczur 2).

Performative Allyship: When someone claims to be working with a marginalized individual or group but their words or actions bring more attention to themselves and fail to make meaningful progress on the issue(s) they claim to support. Performative allyship pulls focus from efforts to bring about transformative change.

Barrier: Anything preventing people with disabilities from fully participating in society. A barrier can be an attitude or a physical thing like a staircase. Barriers can be caused by policies, practices or a lack of adaptive services or technologies [Government of British Columbia Section 2].

Biases: Shortcuts our brains make based on our life experience, our culture and other influences (e.g. friends, colleagues, the media). We tend to think favourably about people who are like us, about people in our ‘in-group’ (people who are from the same religion as

us) and unfavorably about people in any 'out-group' (people from a different religion) (Tyner 4-5). We develop biases towards particular groups of people over time as we are exposed to negative, stereotypical beliefs about specific groups of people such as the false assumption that disabled people are 'lazy'.

Explicit vs. Implicit Biases: We can be aware or conscious of our biases (explicit biases) or unaware or unconscious of them (implicit biases). Implicit biases can be very harmful because they are attitudes that affect our thoughts and decision-making processes in an unconscious manner (*The Art of Inclusion* 38).

Binary Thinking: A way of seeing the world in terms of opposites such as good/bad or for/against. "Binary thinking can be a form of denial or resistance" to change: it incorrectly assumes there are only two mutually exclusive options and nothing in between (Calgary Anti-Racism Education Collective 4). This way of thinking can also lead people to believe that if the Library provides services for people with disabilities, these services must come at the expense of another group namely, people without disabilities. This is false – greater accessibility benefits everyone.

Cultural Safety: The development of relationships and sharing of knowledge between two cultures can only occur if both parties see each other as equals worthy of respect and, pursue mutual understanding not cultural dominance (Curtis et. al., 2019).

Disability: "An inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier" [Government of British Columbia Section 1]. A disability can be temporary, sporadic or permanent.

Non-apparent disability: This term is gaining popularity because "it implies that the disability is just that – non-apparent" ("*Non-apparent disability*" 1). Some people with disabilities may prefer this neutral term over the terms hidden or invisible disability.

Hidden disability: This term can imply that the person with a disability is purposefully withholding this information from others. There is a difference between choosing to not self-disclose a disability versus actively hiding it ("*Non-apparent disability*" 1). Self-disclosing can be harmful because of stereotypical beliefs that disabled people are weak, dependent on others and unworthy of respect.

Invisible Disability: For some, this term is offensive. While society is moving away from the idea that everything operates as a binary, the term "invisible disability" can imply that they are 'less real' than visible disabilities, and make people living with "invisible disabilities" feel less seen and less valued ("*Non-apparent disability*" 1)

Mobility Disability: An illness, injury or impairment that prevents a person from leaving home or visiting the library on their own ("*Accessibility at the Library*" 3).

Disabled Person vs Person with a Disability: Terminology evolves over time. Many organizations, including the provincial government, use ‘*person-first language*’. “Person-first language emphasizes the person before the disability”, for example a person with mobility challenges (Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion 1). Identity-first language prioritizes the disability in the description, e.g., “disabled person” (Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion 1). Each person has the right to choose how to self-identify and personal preference may change over time. If you are unsure which term to use, it is best practice to ask a person which term they prefer (“Developing Your First Accessibility Plan” 58).

Discrimination: The “unfair or prejudicial treatment” of an individual or group based on social factors such as ability/disability, cultural background, age and more (“Discrimination: What is it...” 1). Discrimination can be direct or indirect and frequently hinders an individual or a group from being able to exercise their human rights and fully participate in society. The Library’s *Respectful Workplace Policy* makes it clear that discrimination of any kind violates our code of conduct and will not be tolerated. The Library’s Security Manual section on setting boundaries also provides examples of discriminatory behaviour and guidance on how to establish healthy boundaries.

Systemic Discrimination: This refers to the policies, attitudes and actions that govern our daily lives that may seem neutral but, they disproportionately exclude or limit the participation of certain groups of people in society.

Equality: The quality or state of being equal as it relates to rights and opportunities (“Equity vs. Equality” 2). However, treating individuals the same does not create equality.

Equity: Equity is fair and impartial treatment, access, and opportunity. Equity recognizes that a person or a group can have unique circumstances and needs. To achieve equitable outcomes for all community members, a marginalized individual or a group may need to receive something different (not equal) (“Equity vs. Equality” 2). For example, a person with a disability may need adaptive technology to fully enjoy a library event.

Identity: Identity is not fixed – it is contextual, which means that a person’s identity can fluctuate over time as they interact with other people, organizations and communities.

Impairment: Any physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive limitation that interacts with a barrier to hinder the ability of a person to fully participate in society (Government of British Columbia Section 1).

Intersectionality: This term, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is a metaphor that can be used to understand how different types of discrimination can affect one another and overlap to create complex layers of oppression (Coaston 7). Picture a road map. Ableism is a road running north and south, and racism is a road running east and west. Where these two roads meet, ableism and racism become intertwined.

Similarly, it is impossible to separate the impact ableism and racism have on an individual who is both disabled and Iranian. This metaphor can become unmanageable when you add in other types discrimination (e.g. sexism) but the central idea holds.

Medical Model of Disability: This outdated model treats disability as a defect within an individual and places the burden of correcting this deficiency on the individual. This model implies that people with disabilities can only expect to fully participate in society if they fix their ‘abnormality’ (University of California San Francisco 1). This model falsely assumes that everyone with a disability wants to become or appear ‘normal’. Avoid using this model.

Microaggressions: Disrespectful communication such as words, body language or environmental snubs, that indirectly or subtly marginalizes people based solely on one or more aspects of their identity such as gender, race or class. The term microaggressions is misleading because the harm they cause can be severe.

Negative language: The following are terms that are now recognized as demeaning and disrespectful to people with disabilities: retarded, defective, crippled, lame, etc. Avoid using these words.

Safe spaces: Physical and virtual spaces or forums where people can openly discuss controversial topics without fear of retaliation or judgment (“Safe space” 1).

Social Model of Disability: According to this model: “the solution...lies not in fixing the person but in changing our society” (University of California San Francisco 1). Each member of society, not just people with disabilities, has a responsibility to remove accessibility barriers, and improve the quality of life and opportunities for people with disabilities. The social model sees disability as a neutral part of personhood – it is simply a part of who you are, it is not something bad that needs to be fixed or cured. Use this model instead of the medical model.

Stereotype: An exaggerated and false belief or generalization about a group of people.

Systemic Barriers: “Obstacles that intentionally or unintentionally exclude individuals, groups and/or communities, and are often out of the control of any individual person...[they] occur when policies, projects, programs and services are created without [the] benefit of a range of perspectives during their development” (*The Art of Inclusion* 38).

Tokenism: An empty, symbolic phrase or action that is supposed to signal substantive change but fails to achieve it.

Trauma: The way a person reacts to an extreme threat of harm (physical, emotional, psychological, etc.), actual harm, or to an event that is deeply stressful or disturbing (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 8).

These events can happen once (e.g. a severe car accident), over an extended period of time (e.g. a long-term illness like cancer), or repeatedly over time (e.g. ongoing sexual abuse) that is otherwise known as complex or cumulative trauma (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 8). Each person’s experience, even with the same event, can be different.

Historical or Intergenerational Trauma: Trauma and the negative, long-term consequences of trauma that are passed down from one generation to another. Intergenerational trauma includes both collective harm done to a group of people and individual harm done to specific individuals.

Workplace Restoration: Policies and processes designed to support individuals and groups “that are experiencing significant relationship and trust issues that represent barriers to a healthy and productive” workplace (*The Art of Inclusion* 38).

5.4 APPENDIX D: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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