

Town of Osoyoos Accessibility Audit:

Final Report

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Submitted to:

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) was hired by the Town of Osoyoos in September 2012 to undertake an audit of municipal facilities. As part of the project, the SPARC BC audit team visited the following types of sites in October 2012:

- Recreation facilities;
- Municipal buildings;
- Parks;
- Sidewalks and intersections;
- Community facilities.

An accessibility audit team was formed to conduct the audit. This team consisted of a SPARC BC staff member and a local resident with a disability. The audit was conducted using SPARC BC's accessibility audit tool, a checklist which allows the audit team to quickly and efficiently review sites.

Audit Findings

This report outlines detailed audit findings and recommendations for each site in the "Audit Findings and Recommendations" portion of the report. In general, the consultants found that the community has demonstrated its commitment to improving community accessibility by making accessibility improvements to older buildings such as the Senora Centre, Sun Bowl Arena, the Library and the Seniors Centre. In addition, some new park spaces such as the Pioneer Walkway were built to a high level of accessibility with accessible washrooms and designated accessible parking. However, the older buildings and parks that were constructed under previous building and design standards have significant accessibility barriers. In addition, there are some reoccurring accessibility challenges in newer parks and facilities.

Some of the reoccurring audit findings are outlined below as well as in the "Overall Audit Findings" section.

Accessible parking

- Improve the visibility of designated parking stalls by providing both a sign on a post as well as a painted symbol within the stall.
- Avoid locating accessible parking stalls on slopes which create a safety hazard for people transferring between their vehicles and wheelchairs.

Staircases and ramps

- Improve the safety of staircases and ramps for people with low vision by adding tactile warning strips at the top and bottom of staircases and ramps, as well as on each individual step.
- Alongside staircases and ramps, provide round handrails (instead of rectangular handrails) which are easier to grasp onto for someone with limited hand strength and dexterity.
- Wherever possible, provide ramps with a slope of 1:20.

Washrooms

- Upgrade older washrooms so that they comply with the updated accessibility standards in the BC Building Code.
- Make minor accessibility enhancements to newer washrooms (e.g. provide lower coat hooks that are reachable for people seated in wheelchairs; install a second grab bar behind the toilet if the toilet does not have a water tank with a bolted down lid; provide washroom signage in Braille/raised lettering.)

Parks and walkways

- Provide accessible pathways connecting key activity areas in parks. For example, grass park surfaces are not accessible pathways for people with physical disabilities since it is very difficult, and often impossible, for people with mobility devices to travel over grass.
- Provide accessible benches that are connected to accessible pathways and provide a clear space for someone seated in a wheelchair to sit beside their friends/family on the bench.
- Provide accessible picnic tables that are connected to accessible pathways and have an extended table top to allow someone seated in a wheelchair to wheel underneath.
- Provide accessible play equipment.

Sidewalks, crosswalks, and intersections

- Repair cracked pavement which creates a safety hazard for people with disabilities at curb ramps and curb cuts.
- Explore adopting the Canadian National Institute for the Blind's guidelines for accessible curb ramps and pedestrian crossing signals.

Overall recommendations

In addition, the audit team has also developed a broad set of policy recommendations for the Town of Osoyoos to consider when working to implement accessibility recommendations over time. These recommendations include:

- Start with low cost changes (e.g. adjusting the height of a coat hook);
- Start with higher priority recommendations (e.g. higher use areas);
- Consider accessibility early on during the initial design phase of a new development or renovation;
- Develop a plan for implementing more expensive recommendations over time.

2. INTRODUCTION

In September 2012, the Town of Osoyoos hired the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) to undertake an accessibility audit of municipal facilities. The accessibility audit took place in October 2012 and assessed the level of accessibility in a variety of facilities including:

- Recreation facilities (e.g. Senora Centre, Sun Bowl Area);
- Municipal buildings (e.g. Town Hall, Public Works Office);
- Parks;
- Sidewalks and intersections;
- Community facilities (e.g. Seniors Centre, Art Gallery).

The purpose of the project was to present recommendations for the Town of Osoyoos to become an accessibility leader for people with disabilities. In particular, the project:

- Assessed the current level of accessibility for people with disabilities;
- Identified issues and opportunities to improve accessibility within the Town;
- Increased awareness and knowledge of accessibility issues.

Through improving community accessibility, the Town of Osoyoos will enhance quality of life for residents with disabilities, including seniors with age-related disabilities. In addition, becoming a model community for accessibility and inclusion can help the Town become a premiere resort destination for tourists of all ages and abilities.

3. AUDIT METHOD

The accessibility audit took place during October 2012. An accessibility audit team was formed which consists of a SPARC BC staff member and a local Osoyoos resident with a disability. This “community-capacity building” approach to accessibility audits involves training a local person with a disability on SPARC BC’s accessibility audit approach, and builds community capacity to undertake future accessibility audits.

The audit was conducted using SPARC BC’s accessibility audit tool, a checklist which allows the audit team to quickly and efficiently review sites. This audit tool is based upon guidelines developed by the BC Building Code, Canadian Abilities Foundation Access Guide, Mobility International USA, the American’s with Disabilities Act guidelines, and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind guidelines.

SPARC BC’s audit tool concentrates on the following main accessibility features:

- Designated accessible parking;
- Accessible entrances;
- Circulation (i.e. accessible paths of travel, elevators);
- Service counters;
- Accessible washrooms;
- Access to facilities and amenities;
- Accessible signage

The audit checklist also outlines specific requirements for public facilities, parks, transportation, retail stores, hotels and restaurants. In addition to the checklists, audit tools include a digital camera, tape measure and notebook.

Municipal staff was also invited to accompany the accessibility audit team throughout the audit process. This provided an opportunity for staff to learn the SPARC BC accessibility audit process and increase their accessibility knowledge.

4. AUDIT FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the key audit findings and recommendations for the various sites that were visited as part of the audit. It is organized under the following headings: recreation facilities; municipal buildings; municipal parks; sidewalks and intersections; other community facilities.

4.1 Recreation facilities

The recreation facilities that were assessed during the audit include; the Sonora Community Centre; Okanagan Regional Library; and Sun Bowl Arena.

4.1.1 *Sonora Community Centre*

The Sonora Community Centre is an older building which was built before the BC Building Code took into consideration accessibility needs; however, since its conversion to the Sonora Community Centre, the Town has demonstrated its commitment to accessibility by upgrading accessibility standards throughout the building. Some examples of accessibility improvements include the installation of accessible ramps, washrooms and elevators.

East Entrance

Recommendation: Improve signage for accessible parking stall by east entrance

In order for an accessible parking stall to be fully accessible, it needs to be well marked so that people without disabilities do not accidentally park there. In order to be well marked, it needs to have both a painted symbol within the stall as well as a sign on a post (or in this case a sign attached to the chain link fence). The current painted symbol also needs to be repainted to improve visibility.

Photo 1: Sonora Centre – Parking stall by east entrance



Recommendation: Provide an accessible pathway between the parking lot and basketball court

Some community members may wish to park at the Sonora Community Centre and walk over to the basketball court. Accessibility could be enhanced by providing a paved pathway to the basketball court that is at least 36” wide, as well as an accessible viewing area alongside the court. This would make it possible for people with disabilities to use the basketball court and watch their children play basketball.

Photo 2: Sonora Centre – Inaccessible pathway from parking lot to basketball court



Recommendation: Provide an accessible picnic table with an extended table top

The picnic table by the east entrance is relatively accessible because it is surrounded by a paved, accessible surface. However, accessibility could be enhanced by providing an extended table top which would allow someone seated in a wheelchair to wheel underneath.

Photo 3: Sonora Centre – Picnic table by east entrance



Recommendation: Provide more gradual ramps in future facilities

The current ramp has a slope of approximately 1:12 which meets minimum accessibility standards, but is a bit challenging for someone with limited upper body strength to use. Ramps with a slope of 1:20 are more accessible. That being said, it is not always possible to install a ramp with a slope of 1:20 in a renovated building like the Sonora Centre. Thus, the best course of action is to plan to provide ramps with a slope of 1:20 in all new facilities.

Photo 4: Sonora Centre – Ramp by east entrance



Recommendation: Improve the accessibility of the staircase for people with low vision

The current staircase by the east entrance lacks tactile warning strips on the stair nosings which warn people with low vision about a change in elevation. According to Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), stair nosings should: have a colour/brightness contrasted strip; be a maximum of 50 mm deep; and be applied to the leading edge of the tread and the vertical face of the nosing.

Photo 5: Sonora Centre – Stairway by east entrance



Recommendation: Improve signage for accessible parking stall by north entrance

In order for an accessible parking stall to be fully accessible, it needs to be well marked so that people without disabilities do not accidentally park there. In order to be well marked, it needs to have both a painted symbol within the stall as well as a sign on a post. It is recommended that a sign post be installed for this parking stall.

Photo 6: Sonora Centre – Parking stall by north entrance



Key Finding: The north entrance is relatively accessible

The north entrance is relatively accessible because there is a ramp with a gradual incline and an automatic push button at the entrance.

Photo 7: Sonora Centre – Ramp by north entrance



Recommendation: Provide tactile warning strips on staircase by north entrance

The current staircase by the north entrance lacks *tactile* warning strips on the stair nosings which warn people with low vision about a change in elevation. The painted yellow strips would not be detectable for someone who is fully blind. According to Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), nosings should: have a colour/brightness contrasted strip; have a maximum depth of 50 mm; and be applied to the leading edge of the tread and the vertical face of the nosing.

Photo 8: Sonora Centre – Staircase by north entrance



Recommendation: Provide an accessible parking stall in the staff parking lot

The staff parking lot currently lacks an accessible parking stall for employees/volunteers with disabilities. It is recommended that an accessible parking stall be created for staff/volunteers with disabilities.

Photo 9: Sonora Centre – Staff parking lot



Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of improving the accessibility of the staff entrance

The entrance leading from the staff parking lot into the Sonora Centre is currently inaccessible because:

- It does not have an automatic door opener;
- The key system is difficult to operate (i.e. a fob system would be more accessible);
- The ramp leading up to it is steep, and there is no landing for someone to rest while they are opening the door.

It is recommended that the Town explore the feasibility of addressing these accessibility barriers for staff/volunteers with disabilities.

Photo 10: Sonora Centre – Entrance by staff parking lot



Washrooms

The accessible men and women’s washroom by the north entrance are both relatively accessible. However, accessibility could be enhanced by:

- Providing lever door handles which are easy to grasp onto for someone with limited strength or hand dexterity;
- Installing a kick plate (which prevents someone using a wheelchair from scratching the door paint);
- Installing a tactile sign with raised lettering/symbols for people who are blind;
- Providing another grab bar behind the toilet (since there is no toilet basin to grab onto when transferring from a chair to toilet seat);
- Adjusting the height of the soap dispenser, towel dispenser, coat hook in the men’s washroom so that they are reachable for someone seated in a wheelchair.

Photo 11: Sonora Centre – Accessible women's washroom door with knob-style handle



Photo 12: Sonora Centre – Inside of accessible washroom



Water fountain by north entrance

Key finding: The water fountain is both wheelchair accessible and cane detectable for people with low vision

The water fountain is accessible for someone seated in a wheelchair because it is possible to pull up underneath. In addition, the protruding water fountain is also cane detectable because it is located at an accessible height. The lowest leading edge is positioned 660 mm above the ground, and objects with a lowest leading edge under 680 mm are cane detectable (Note: if an object protrudes at a level higher than 680 mm and below 2300 mm, the object can be made cane detectable if a railing, planter, or another barrier is placed at or below 680 mm from the walking surface).

Photo 13: Sonora Centre – Accessible water fountain



Gymnasium

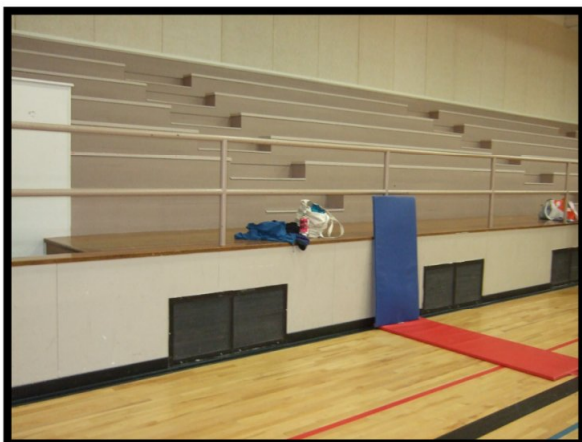
Recommendation: Install a lighter spring or automatic door opener on the entrance door

The current entrance door for the gymnasium is challenging to operate for someone with limited strength. Installing a lighter spring or automatic door opener would make the door accessible for a greater number of users.

Recommendation: Provide designated accessible seating in the bleachers

The bleachers are currently inaccessible because there is a set of stairs leading up to them. However, accessibility can be enhanced by reserving the front row of bleacher for seniors with mobility limitations; since some people may be able to use the stairs but fatigue easily. In addition, accessibility could be enhanced by installing a handrail beside the staircase as well as tactile stair nosings which are detectable for people with low vision.

Photo 14: Sonora Centre – Gymnasium bleachers



Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of providing a stair lift to the stage

There is a set of stairs leading up to the stage, which would prevent some people who use mobility devices from accessing it. Accessibility could be enhanced by providing a stair lift leading up to the stage.

Photo 15: Sonora Centre – Staircase leading to the stage



Recommendation: Provide tactile warning strips on staircase leading up to the stage

The current staircase lacks tactile warning strips on the stair nosings which warns people with low vision about a change in elevation. According to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), nosings should: have a colour/brightness contrasted strip; have a maximum depth of 50 mm; and be applied to the leading edge of the tread and the vertical face of the nosing.

Recommendation: Provide a warning strip on the edge of the stage for someone with limited vision

The edge of the stage would be a safety hazard for a performer with limited vision because there is nothing to warn them about the drop off. Accessibility could be enhanced by providing a tactile warning strip at the end of the stage.

Weight room

Recommendation: Provide lever style door handle on weight room door

The door has a knob style handle which is difficult to operate for someone with limited hand strength and dexterity. Accessibility can be improved by providing a lever style handle.

Recommendation: Adjust the base of the hand cycle

The hand cycle is almost accessible for someone using a wheelchair, because it can be adjusted for different heights, etc. However, the base of the machine has some ridges which make it a challenge for someone seated in a wheelchair to wheel in and out independently. Accessibility could be enhanced by providing a smooth base.

Photo 16: Sonora Centre – Hand cycle in weight room



Photo 17: Sonora Centre – Base of hand cycle



Recommendation: Explore the possibility of providing more adapted equipment in the weight room

If there is demand from the community, it may be beneficial to add adapted equipment to the weight room. One example is a raised bench that allows someone in a wheelchair to transfer from their chair to the bench for stretches and strength training.

Recommendation: Provide tactile warning strips on emergency exit staircase and ramp by weight room

The current emergency exit staircase lacks tactile warning strips which warn people with low vision about a change in elevation. Similarly, the ramp by the weight room also lacks tactile warning strips. According to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), stair nosings should have a colour/brightness contrasted strip; have a maximum depth of 50 mm; and be applied to the leading edge of the tread and the vertical face of the nosing. Ramps should have a tactile warning strip at the bottom and top of the ramp to warn people with low vision about a change in elevation.

Photo 18: Sonora Centre – Stairs by emergency exit

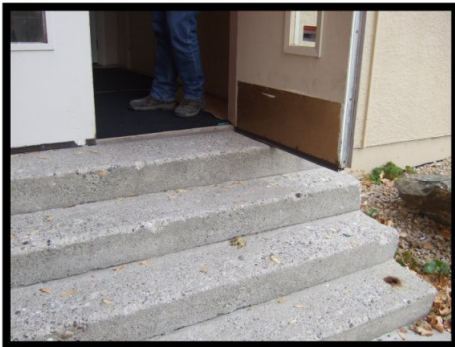


Photo 19: Sonora Centre – Ramp beside weight room



Office

The current office is relatively accessible because it has a lever style door handle; a desk with a good amount of clearance underneath (28"); most pathways are wide enough for mobility devices; and it is easy to reach things.

Recommendation: Make slight accessibility improvements to the office for staff, volunteers with disabilities

Accessibility of the office can be enhanced by:

- Ensuring all pathways are at least 36" wide;
- Providing a higher and a lower counter at the front;
- Ensuring that extra supplies can be reached by someone seated in a wheelchair.

Women's washroom by staff room

Accessibility of the women's washroom could be enhanced by:

- Improving the accessible washroom cubicle (e.g. installing a grab bar behind the toilet; installing a grab handle on the inside of the door; lowering the height of the garbage bin);
- Installing a kick plate on the door so that wheelchairs do not scratch the paint;
- Replacing the sink faucet handles with lever handles that are easier to grasp onto for someone with limited hand dexterity.

Staff room

Accessibility of the staff room could be enhanced by:

- Lowering the height of the soap dispenser and towel dispenser so that they are easily reached by someone using a wheelchair;
- Providing a kick plate on the door;
- Adding tactile stickers to the microwave buttons for staff with low vision.

Multipurpose room

Recommendation: Install lever handle and kick plate on the door.

The multipurpose room is relatively accessible. However, accessibility can be enhanced by installing a lever door handle and a kick plate on the door.

Kitchen

Some aspects of the kitchen are very accessible. For instance, the hand controls on the front of the stove are easier to reach for people seated in wheelchairs.

Photo 20: Sonora Centre – Stove with hand controls on front



Recommendation: Provide knee space underneath the sink and ensure that commonly used items are within reach/located close to the counter.

Accessibility could be enhanced in the kitchen by:

- Ensuring that supplies are easy to reach for someone seated in a wheelchair.
- Providing knee space underneath the sink for someone seated in a wheelchair.

Second floor

The second floor of the Sonora Centre has a number of excellent accessibility features including an accessible elevator; accessible staircase; accessible washrooms; accessible rooms.

Recommendation: Install tactile warning strips on emergency stairwell

The current staircase lacks tactile warning strips on the stair nosings which warn people with low vision about a change in elevation. According to Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), nosings should: have a colour/brightness contrasted strip; have a maximum depth of 50 mm, be applied to the leading edge of the tread and the vertical face of the nosing.

Recommendation: Install lever style handles on all doors upstairs

Most of the doors upstairs have knob style handles that are challenging to use for someone with limited hand strength/dexterity. Accessibility could be improved by providing lever style handles.

Recommendation: Provide knee space underneath sinks in craft room and canteen space

Providing clear space beneath sinks allows people with disabilities to wheel underneath the sink and use the sink.

Recommendation: Provide wider doorways

Because it is an older building, the doorways do not meet the minimum accessibility standard of 915 mm wide. Individuals who use narrow chairs are able to use the entrances, but they may be too small for people with larger scooters and other mobility devices.

Recommendation: Make minor accessibility improvements to the washrooms by the Autism Centre

There is a women's washroom and a men's washroom by the Autism centre. These were both built to a high standard of accessibility. Some recommendations to further enhance accessibility include:

- Provide a grab bar behind the accessible toilets since the toilet's water tank does not have a bolt down lid;
- Lower the coat hook in the accessible men's washroom stall so that it is reachable for someone seated in a wheelchair;
- Provide a higher and lower urinal in the men's washroom (Note: a higher urinal is good for taller people, and a lower urinal is good for children, people with disabilities emptying a leg bag, and for people of short stature).

4.1.2 Okanagan Regional Library

The Okanagan Regional Library is located within the Sonora Centre. It is already relatively accessible for people with disabilities. Some accessibility features include:

- Books in accessible formats for people with low vision;
- Spacious aisles;
- Accessible desks.

Recommendation: Install an automatic door opener for the library

The main entrance door is heavy, which can create an accessibility barrier when the door is closed. However, this door is usually kept open during operating hours. The door is only closed when it is noisy in the Sonora Centre foyer.

Recommendation: Position books at accessible heights

The top shelves of the library are not reachable for someone seated in a wheelchair. Accessibility can be enhanced by positioning books at accessible heights. If space is an issue, this barrier can be addressed by training staff to offer assistance to people using mobility devices (if this is not already done).

4.1.3 Sun Bowl Arena

The Sun Bowl Arena is an older facility which was built before the BC Building Code took into consideration accessibility needs; however, the Town of Osoyoos has put considerable effort into upgrading accessibility over time for local residents.

Recommendation: Improve signage for accessible parking stalls

The Sun Bowl arena provides visitors two accessible parking stalls. Overall, these parking stalls are very accessible. However, accessibility could be enhanced by providing visitors with an accessible parking stall sign on a post as well as a painted symbol on the stall. This improves visibility of the accessible parking stall and makes it less likely that someone without a disability will accidentally park there, particularly in winter months when the parking stall may be covered with snow.

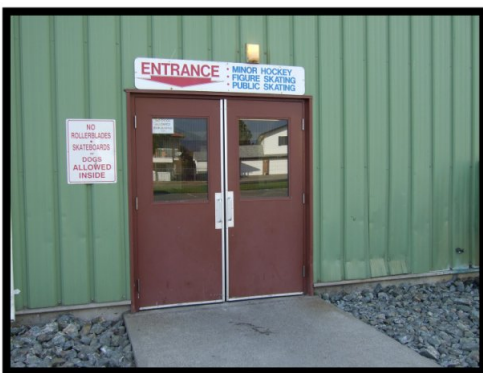
Photo 21: Sun Bowl Arena – Accessible parking stall



Recommendation: Provide automatic door opener at main entrance

The main arena entrances are relatively accessible since they have loop style handles which are easy to operate for someone with limited hand dexterity or strength, and a level threshold leading to the door. However, accessibility could be enhanced by providing an automatic door opener.

Photo 22: Sun Bowl Arena – Main entrance



Key finding: Accessible viewing area is accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.

The accessible viewing area is an excellent example of the Town of Osoyoos' commitment to improving accessibility for residents with disabilities. This viewing area allows a person seated in a wheelchair to watch hockey games and other community events. This viewing area is also inclusive because it includes bleachers so that people with disabilities have the opportunity to sit alongside friends and family members without disabilities. The accessible viewing area is also positioned at a good height because a person seated in a wheelchair has an unobstructed view of the ice.

Photo 23: Sun Bowl Arena – Accessible viewing area



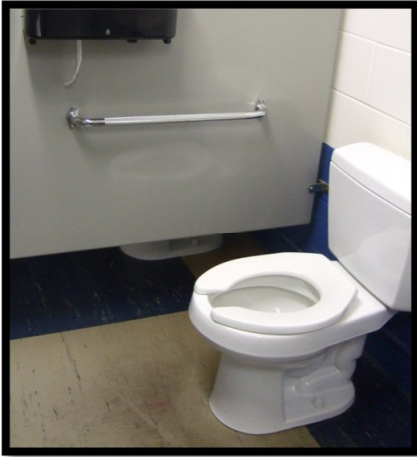
Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of providing a ramp with a slope of 1:20

One limitation of the accessible viewing areas is that the ramp leading up to it is a bit steep. As a result, most people using manual wheelchairs would need to ask a friend, family member, or other community member to push them up to the top of the ramp. Thus, it is recommended that the Town explore the feasibility of replacing the current ramp with a longer ramp with a slope of 1:20.

Washrooms

Both the men's and women's washrooms have been renovated to meet accessibility needs and offer accessibility features such as: an accessible washroom stall; grab bars; space to maneuver; lever faucet handles, and knee space underneath the sink.

Photo 24: Sun Bowl Arena – Accessible washroom stall



Recommendation: Enhance the accessibility of the accessible washrooms

While the washrooms met most basic accessibility needs, the audit also identified some opportunities to improve accessibility including the following:

- Provide lower coat hooks in the accessible washroom stalls that are reachable for people seated in wheelchairs;
- Provide an accessible sign which incorporates Braille/raised lettering for people with low vision;
- Provide an additional grab bar behind toilet basin since the basin is not firmly attached (Note: this allows people to grab onto something as they transfer from the wheelchair seat to the toilet seat).
- Provide a grab bar by the men's urinal for extra stability.

Photo 25: Sun Bowl Arena – Urinal in men's washroom



Circulation

Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of renovating the office areas so that they are accessible for volunteers/employees with disabilities

Because the arena is an older building, there are a number of areas of the building which are not connected by accessible pathways. Some challenges include changes in elevation (i.e. steps), and narrow pathways and doorways into various offices and rooms. For example:

- There is a step leading into the room that is usually used as a women's change room (Note: access can be provided by an alternate outside door into the changing room);
- There is a step leading into the referee room;
- There is a very narrow doorway leading into the figure skater's office;
- The ticket office is a bit small for someone seated in a wheelchair;
- The concession area is a bit narrow.

Residents with disabilities may also enjoy an opportunity to work or volunteer at the arena. In order for this to be possible, it is recommended that the Town explore the feasibility of the renovating the office areas of the arena to provide accessible pathways/doorways which are wide enough for wheelchairs (at least 36" wide), and are not obstructed by steps.

Recommendation: Provide an accessible elevator which provides access to the second floor

The second floor of the arena is an important part of community space for the following reasons:

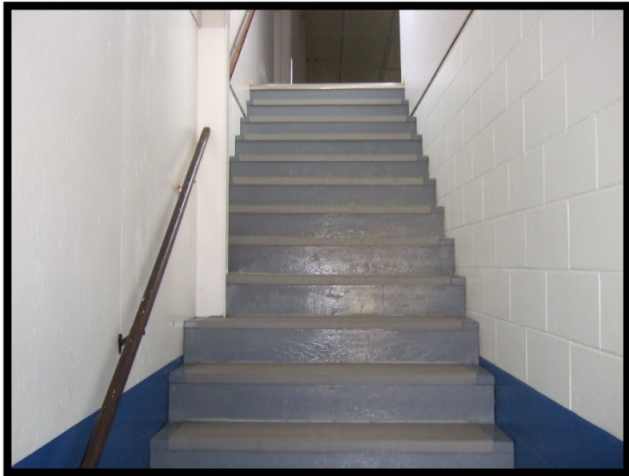
- It has a banquet room where community events/parties are held;
- It is the location of the arena Boardroom where important meetings are held;
- The second floor provides access to the second floor of the curling club.
- Minor hockey and figure skating groups also use this community space.

In order for residents with disabilities to feel included in fully community life, it is necessary to provide access to this important community amenity. Thus, it is recommended that an elevator be installed which provides access to the second floor.

Recommendation: Provide tactile warning strips on staircase for people with low vision

The current staircase by the north entrance lacks tactile warning strips on the stair nosings which warn people with low vision about a change in elevation. According to Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), nosings should have a colour/brightness contrasted strip; have a maximum depth of 50 mm; be applied to the leading edge of the tread and the vertical face of the nosing.

Photo 26: Sun Bowl Arena – Staircase leading to second floor



Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of providing an accessible pathway leading into the Junior B room

Currently there is a gravel pathway leading into to the Junior B room which would block access for many people with disabilities. Accessibility could be enhanced by providing a paved pathway around the building.

Photo 27: Sun Bowl Arena – Gravel pathway leading to Junion B room



Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of providing a level accessible entrance to the ice rink

In order for people with disabilities to be fully included in recreation opportunities at the rink, people with disabilities would need to have access to the same opportunities as people without disabilities. This would include access to both the ice surface as well as access to change rooms so that locals can participate in activities like sledge hockey. The entrance would need to be at least 915 mm wide, and would need to be level with no abrupt changes in elevation between the ice surface and the off ice area.

Photo 28: Sun Bowl Arena – Entrance to ice rink by Junior B room



Change rooms

Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of renovating change rooms for accessibility

Because the building was built before the BC Building Code took into mind accessibility considerations, none of the change rooms have been designed to be fully accessible. Accessibility barriers include:

- shower stalls which require people to step over a lip to enter (as opposed to wheel in shower stalls) and do not have adjustable, easy to reach controls and accessible benches;
- washroom stalls that are not large enough to accommodate wheelchairs and lack grab bars;
- coat hooks that are too high;
- round door/faucet handles which are difficult to operate for people with limited hand strength and dexterity (note: lever handles would improve access).

It is recommended that the Town explore the feasibility of renovating the change rooms with accessibility in mind. At minimum, a newly constructed and/or renovated arena space should be built to a higher standard of accessibility.

Photo 29: Sun Bowl Arena – Example of inaccessible shower stall in change room



Photo 30: Sun Bowl Arena – Example of inaccessible washroom stall in change room



Photo 31: Sun Bowl Arena – Example of inaccessible coat hook rack



4.2 Municipal buildings

The municipal buildings that were assessed during this audit include: Town Hall, the Planning and Development Services office; and the Public Works office.

4.2.1 Town Hall

Recommendation: Improve accessible parking at Town Hall

The current angled accessible parking spot can be a challenge to use because of the slope of the road. It can be hazardous for someone to transfer from a car seat to a wheelchair because the chair can roll downhill and it increases the risk of falls. The slope of the road is difficult to address, because it is a provincial roadway and the province has crowning requirements for snow removal.

Currently, this spot can be used by someone who has a van with a ramp and illegally parks. For example, if a person has a van with a ramp and parallel parks to let the ramp down on top of the sidewalk, it can be used. However, this would require illegal parking and would not be accessible for someone who uses a wheelchair and does not have a van with a ramp.

Thus, there is a need to explore the feasibility of making the following adjustments to the parking stall:

- Replace the current angled stall with an accessible parallel parking stall;
- Install a curb ramp connecting the newly created parking stall to the sidewalk;
- Ensure the stall is wide enough (3.7 m wide) to allow someone using a wheelchair to transfer in and out of their car.

Because of the limitations of this accessible parking stall, it may be best to look into providing another accessible parking stall in the staff parking lot.

Photo 32: Town Hall – Accessible parking stall



Entrance

Recommendation: Improve accessibility at entrance to Town Hall

The current entrance is relatively accessible because it provides a gradual ramp with a threshold at the top of the ramp and an automatic door opener. However, accessibility could be enhanced by:

- Providing tactile warning strips on the stair nosings for people with limited vision;
- Providing round handrails alongside the staircase/ramp which are easier to grasp onto for people with limited hand strength and dexterity.

Photo 33: Town Hall – Entrance

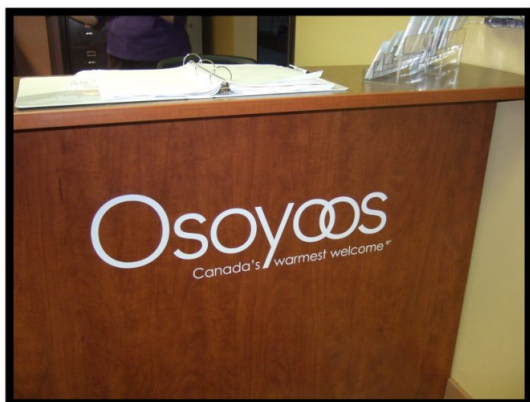


Reception

Recommendation: Provide an accessible reception desk with a higher and lower counter

Accessibility could be enhanced at the reception desk by providing a higher counter for individuals who have difficulties bending over, as well as an accessible lower counter for people seated in wheelchairs which allow people to wheel underneath the desk and fill in forms.

Photo 34: Town Hall — Reception Desk



Office area

Some aspects of the office area are already accessible for employees/volunteers with disabilities. For instance, the desk spaces are accessible and allow someone seated in a wheelchair to wheel underneath.

Recommendation: Improve accessibility of Town Hall office area for employees/volunteers with disabilities

Some recommendations to make the office fully accessible for employees/volunteers with disabilities include:

- Renovate the washroom with accessibility in mind;
- Provide more space to maneuver in the copy room;
- Ensure that all doorways/pathways are at least 915 mm wide;
- Provide a microwave that is located at an accessible height for people using wheelchairs;
- Attach tactile buttons on the microwave for someone who is blind.

Council Chambers

Some aspects of the entrance to Council Chambers are relatively accessible. For example, there is a ramp and an automatic door.

Recommendation: Improve accessibility of ramp leading into Council Chambers

However, there are some opportunities to improve the accessibility of the ramp leading in to Council Chambers:

- Repair cracked pavement which limits accessibility of ramp;
- Provide a handrail along the upper portion of the ramp.

Photo 35: Town Hall – Base of ramp leading to Council Chambers

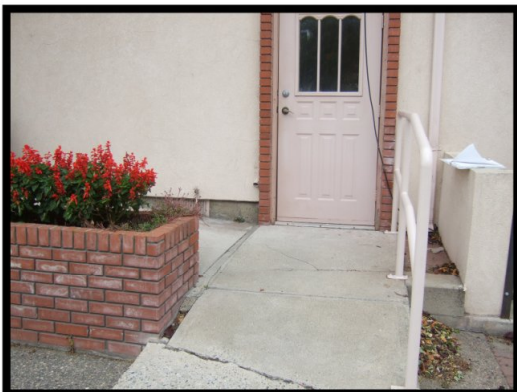


Photo 36: Town Hall – Upper portion of ramp leading to Council Chambers



Recommendation: Provide a hearing induction loop in Council Chambers

Accessibility can also be enhanced by providing a hearing induction loop in Council Chambers for people with limited hearing.

4.2.2 Planning and Development Services office

Since the Development Services office shares the same parking options as Town Hall, this section will not discuss accessible parking.

Recommendation: Improve accessibility of main entrance

The staircase at the Planning and Development Services office was built before the BC Building Code took into account accessibility needs. Some accessibility challenges include:

- The lack of tactile warning strips on the stair nosings for people with limited vision;
- The staircase and ramp do not have round handrails which are easier to grasp onto for people with limited hand strength and dexterity.

Photo 37: Planning and Development Services – Main entrance



Recommendation: Improve safety of accessible entrance

The current accessible entrance is located alongside the building. Because of the age of the Planning and Development Services office, the ramp alongside the building was not constructed to meet a high standard of accessibility.

It has a number of accessibility challenges which would prevent many people with disabilities from accessing the entrance safely and independently. For example, there is no handrails alongside the ramp for people to grasp onto for extra support. In addition, the level threshold area at the top of the ramp is unsafe because it is too small and the door opens outwards into the level threshold area. This has a few key safety implications:

- It is unsafe for someone using a wheelchair to wheel up the ramp and open the door independently because they would need to rest on the incline part of the ramp while the door swings open, and thereby risk rolling backwards and injury;
- Similarly, it is unsafe for someone using a wheelchair to wheel up the ramp and use the call button for assistance, because the opening door would hit the person seated in a wheelchair

who is sitting on the threshold area, or the individual would need to rest on the incline portion and risk rolling backwards and injury.

Photo 38: Planning and Development Services – Ramp at accessible entrance with signage



Photo 39: Planning and Development Services – Small level threshold area at top of ramp



Another accessibility challenge is the staircase/drop off on the other side of the level threshold that is not well marked for people with low vision.

Photo 40: Planning and Development Services – Hazard at top of ramp



Because of the age of the building, it would be a challenge to renovate it to meet current accessibility standards. Ideally, the Planning and Development Services Office would be moved to a more accessible location in the future.

However, the overall accessibility of the ramp and call button for assistance could be enhanced by moving the call button for assistance by the “accessible entrance” sign at the base of the ramp and providing a sign that states:

“For your safety, please press the call button for assistance and wait for city staff to open the side door before going up the ramp.”

This would prevent someone from being hit by the door, and would also prevent someone from having to rest on the incline while waiting for the door to open.

Accessibility could also be improved by installing tactile warning strips on the stair case on the other side of the threshold/ramp. This would warn someone with low vision that there is a change in elevation.

Recommendation: Improve accessibility of office area for employees/volunteers with disabilities

In order for the Planning and Development Services office to be fully accessible for employees/volunteers with disabilities, the following recommendations would need to be implemented:

- Renovate the washroom with accessibility in mind;
- Position the microwave in the staff room at an accessible height for someone seated in a wheelchair; add tactile buttons to the microwave for people with low vision;
- Provide knee space underneath the staff room sink to allow someone using a wheelchair to wheel underneath.

4.2.3 Public Works office

As part of the accessibility audit, the consulting team explored whether the Public Works office would be accessible for residents visiting the office and employees/volunteers with disabilities.

Recommendation: Provide accessible parking

The parking lot for the public works yard is loose gravel. In some areas, it is coarse, loose gravel which would block access for many people with disabilities. In other areas it is more finely ground gravel which is accessible. A paved parking lot would provide the highest level of accessibility for local residents who are visiting the Public Works office. Providing designated accessible parking would also prevent others from parking beside a vehicle and blocking the accessible transfer space for that individual.

Photo 41: Public Works office – Gravel parking lot



Recommendation: Install a lever handle or automatic door opener at the main entrance

The main entrance to the Public Works office has a knob style door handle which is difficult to operate for people with limited hand strength and dexterity. Accessibility could be enhanced by installing a lever style handle or an automatic door opener.

Recommendation: Improve accessibility for employees/staff with disabilities

Some aspects of the Public Works office are already accessible for employees/staff with disabilities. For example, the office is spacious and located on one level. Accessibility could be enhanced by:

- Upgrading the staff room (e.g. providing knee space under the sink; locating the microwave at an accessible height for people using wheelchairs; installing tactile buttons on the microwave for staff with low vision);
- Renovating the washroom with accessibility in mind.

4.3 Municipal parks

The following municipal parks were visited as part of this accessibility audit: the Basketball Court/Dog Park and Tennis Court area; Cottonwood Park; Goodman Park; Gyro Park; Kinsmen Park; Legion Beach; Lions Park; the Marina; Pioneer Walkway; Veterans Park. These will be explored in alphabetical order.

4.3.1 Basketball Court, Dog Park and Tennis Court area

Recommendation: Provide an accessible parking lot for the off leash dog park, tennis courts and basketball court

The Town’s new off-leash dog park shares a parking lot with the Town’s tennis courts and basketball court. The coarse, loose gravel surface of the parking lot creates an accessibility barrier for many people using mobility devices. Accessibility could be enhanced by providing an accessible surface (e.g. pavement, finely crushed aggregate) as well as designated accessible parking for people with disabilities. While the parking lot may not necessarily fill up often, providing a designated parking stall would prevent another community member from parking too close to a person’s car and blocking the accessible transfer space that is needed to transfer from a wheelchair to the car.

Photo 42: Dog Park, Basketball Court, Tennis Court – Parking lot



Key Finding: The Entrance to the Tennis Court is accessible

The entrance to the tennis court is accessible because it is at least 915 mm wide. However, the area immediately in front of the entrance would need to be kept clear of loose gravel to allow wheelchair users to access the court and play or watch tennis.

Recommendation: Provide an accessible entrance to the basketball court

The current entrance to the basketball court is not accessible because it is too narrow. It is recommended that an accessible entrance that is at least 915 mm wide be provided, and that the area in front of the entrance be kept free of loose gravel.

Photo 43: Basketball Court – Entrance



Recommendation: Provide an accessible path of travel leading to the dog park

The dog park is not very accessible for people using mobility devices because the loose gravel surface of the parking lot, the loose gravel surface of the pathway leading to the dog park and the grass surface of the dog park. Accessibility could be enhanced by providing an accessible path of travel with an accessible surface (e.g. pavement, finely crushed aggregate) leading to the edge of the dog park.

Photo 44: Dog Park



4.3.2 Cottonwood Park

Recommendation: Improve signage for accessible parking stall

The accessibility of the parking stall could be enhanced by providing a sign on a post (in addition to the painted symbol in the stall) because it would make it less likely that someone would inadvertently park in the accessible parking stall.

Photo 45: Cottonwood Park – Accessible parking stall



Recommendation: Retrofit the washrooms with accessibility mind

Cottonwood park is an older park, and the washrooms were constructed before the BC Building Code took into consideration accessibility. As a result, they are completely inaccessible for people with disabilities and lack accessibility features such as space to maneuver, grab bars, and knee space underneath the sink. Thus, it is recommended that the washrooms be renovated so that they meet current accessibility standards.

Photo 46: Cottonwood Park – Inside of washroom



Key Finding: The pathways are relatively accessible

The pathways throughout the park are relatively accessible for people with disabilities, because they are level and have an accessible paved surface. In addition, all the key activity areas of the park are well connected by accessible pathways, including washrooms and benches.

Photo 47: Cottonwood Park – Pathway and bench



Recommendation: Improve accessibility of benches

The benches are relatively accessible for people with disabilities because they are easily accessed from paved pathways and a person seated in a wheelchair can rest in the pathway and visit with a friend or family member on the bench. However, accessibility would be enhanced by providing benches with an accessible surface beside them. This would allow a person with a disability to sit beside their friend or family member and enjoy the view of the lake. This would also keep the pathway clear during the busier tourist season.

Recommendation: Improve accessibility of staircase for people with limited vision

The current staircase has some accessibility features for people with low vision including handrails as well as a change in texture between the pathway and the staircase (which helps to warn people with low vision about a change in elevation). However, the individual stairs lack tactile warning strips which warn people with low vision about the end of each step. It is recommended that tactile warning strips be incorporated into the staircase.

Photo 48: Cottonwood Park – Staircase



Key finding: The ramp is accessible

Cottonwood Park provide an accessible ramp leading down to the beach. This ramp is accessible because of its gradual incline; hand rails, the tactile warning strip at the top of the ramp. This is an excellent design feature because a person with a disability with access to a flexible rubber runner, or beach mat would be able to reach the water’s edge which meets the highest level of accessibility for beach access.

Photo 49: Cottonwood Park – Ramp to the beach



Key finding: The payphone with TTY enhances accessibility for people who are Deaf

The payphone with TTY enhances accessibility for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing because it allows users with a TTY device to transmit text over telephone lines.

Photo 50: Cottonwood Park – Payphone with TTY

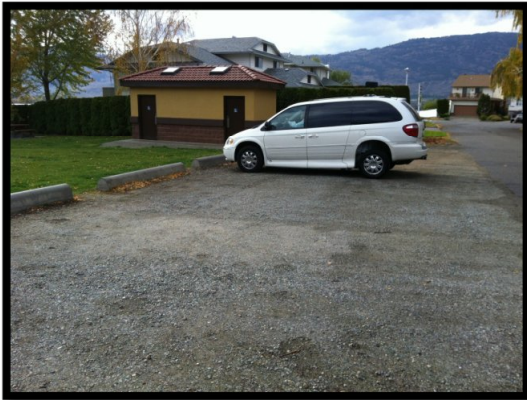


4.3.3 Goodman Park

Recommendation: Provide accessible parking

Goodman Park does not currently provide accessible parking for people with disabilities. Thus, it is recommended that an accessible parking space be designated with signage. In addition, paving the parking lot would enhance accessibility for people with limited mobility, since gravel can be a challenging surface for many people who rely on mobility aids.

Photo 51: Goodman Park – Parking lot



Recommendation: Provide accessible pathways linking different activity areas

In order for a park to be fully accessible, there needs to be accessible pathways linking different amenities (e.g. parking, washrooms, picnic tables, benches etc.). These accessible pathways need to have an accessible surface (e.g. pavement, crushed aggregate) and be free of obstructions. The gravel surface of the parking lot, and the grass surface of the park would be difficult or impossible for most people using mobility devices to travel over. In addition, the concrete curbs in the parking lot prevent there from being an accessible pathway connecting the washrooms to the parking lot. There needs to be an accessible pathway that is at least 915 mm wide (that cannot be blocked by a parked car) in order to provide access to the washrooms for people with disabilities.

Photo 52: Goodman Park – Pathway to accessible washroom blocked by concrete curb



Recommendation: Make minor accessibility improvements to the washroom

The new washrooms were built to a high standard of accessibility and incorporate accessible features such as: Braille/Raised lettering signage; accessible entrances; loop style door handles; grab bars; sinks with knee clearance; easy to operate hand controls; and transfer space alongside the toilet.

However, there are some minor recommendations to enhance the accessibility of the washrooms:

- Provide a grab bar behind the toilet to help someone transfer from the toilet seat to their chair (since there is no toilet basin to grasp onto);
- Provide a coat hook that is reachable for someone seated in a wheelchair.

As was previously mentioned, it is also essential to provide an accessible pathway to the washroom that is not blocked by the concrete curb.

Photo 53: Goodman Park – Braille washroom sign



Photo 54: Goodman Park – Inside of washroom stall



Recommendation: Provide accessible picnic tables and benches

In order for a picnic table to be accessible, it needs to have an accessible path of travel leading up to it; an extended table top that allows a person seated in a wheelchair to wheel underneath; and a clear space of 1200 mm surrounding it.

In order for a bench to be accessible, it needs to have an accessible path of travel leading to it, as well as an accessible clear space beside the bench for a person in a wheelchair to sit alongside friends and family.

Photo 55: Goodman Park – Picnic table



Photo 56: Goodman Park – Bench



4.3.4 Gyro Park

Because Gyro Park is currently under redevelopment, the audit focused on the accessible parking stalls as well as the newly created accessible washroom.

Recommendation: Provide accessible parking stalls on a level surface

Some of the accessible parking stalls in the parking lot adjacent to Gyro Park are located on a cross slope which makes them unsafe for some people with disabilities. As individuals transfer from the car seat to their chair, there is a risk that the wheelchair may roll downhill and that he or she may fall and injure him/herself.

Photo 57: Gyro Park – Parking stalls on cross slope



Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of removing the raised concrete border around the water faucet (i.e. foot washing area)

The water faucet has a raised concrete border surrounding it, which creates a tripping hazard for people with low vision. While the yellow paint increases visibility, it would be more accessible if this concrete border was not in place.

Photo 58: Gyro Park – Water faucet



Washrooms

Because the newly constructed washrooms were built with accessibility in mind, they already meet most accessibility requirements. Some examples of things done well include: level entrances, knee space underneath the sink; adequate space for wheelchair users to maneuver; soap/paper towel dispensers that are easily reached, etc.

Recommendation: Make minor improvements to accessible washrooms

Some recommendations to further enhance accessibility include:

- Install a tactile washroom sign with Braille/raised lettering for people with low vision;
- Install a kick plate on washroom doors to protect the door;
- Provide a grab bar behind the toilet since there is no toilet water tank for someone to grasp onto as they transfer from the toilet to their chair.

Photo 59: Gyro Park – Accessible washroom stall



Recommendation: Provide a lower coat hook in changing area

The current coat hooks in the Gyro Park washrooms would be challenging to reach for people seated in wheelchairs. It is recommended that a lower coat hook be provided that is easy to reach for people with disabilities and children.

Photo 60: Gyro Park – Coat hook



Recommendation: Consider accessibility when re-designing Gyro Park

Some aspects of accessibility could not be assessed during the site visit because the park is currently under redevelopment. Some accessibility considerations to take into account during the development process include the following:

- Provide accessible paths of travel connecting all activity areas (e.g. parking, beach, benches picnic areas);
- Provide accessible picnic tables that are surrounded by an accessible surface and have an extended table top that people using wheelchairs can wheel underneath;
- Provide an accessible dock which provides access for people with disabilities;
- Provide an accessible concession area.

To see some useful accessibility standards that can help to inform future park developments refer to this free online resource: *Accessible Parks and Trails Assessment Toolkit (Appendices A-E)*. This toolkit complements a *Report on Accessible Parks and Trails in British Columbia* that was produced by 2010 Legacies Now.

4.3.5 Kinsmen Park

Kinsmen Park is an older park that was built before building standards took into consideration accessibility needs; a result it lacks many accessibility features.

Recommendation: Provide access to designated accessible parking

In order for the park to be easy to access for people with disabilities, there needs to be designated accessible parking that is:

- well marked with signage;
- meets dimension requirements (3.7 m wide, 7.5 m deep);
- located on an accessible, level surface (e.g. pavement).

Recommendation: Provide accessible pathways linking key amenities throughout the park

In addition, an accessible park needs to have accessible pathways linking key activity areas such as the parking lot, washrooms, picnic tables, and play equipment. This pathway needs to have:

- an accessible surface (e.g. pavement, compacted crushed aggregate);
- minimal slope (1:20 or less) and minimal cross slope;
- a width of at least 920 mm
- no hazards or barriers.

It would be a challenge for most people using mobility devices to travel over the grass, and loose gravel surfaces of Kinsmen Park.

Photo 61: Kinsmen Park – Entrance



Recommendation: Renovate the washrooms with accessibility in mind

The current washrooms at Kinsmen Park were built before building standards took into consideration accessibility needs; thus, it is recommended that the washrooms be renovated to meet current accessibility guidelines.

Recommendation: Provide accessible picnic tables

In order for a picnic table to be accessible, there needs to be:

- an accessible pathway leading to the picnic table;
- a minimum clear space of 1200 mm surrounding the picnic table;
- an accessible surface surrounding the picnic table;
- an extended table top that allows a person seated in a wheelchair to wheel underneath.

Thus, it is recommended that the picnic tables at Kinsmen Park be made accessible.

Photo 62: Kinsmen Park – Picnic table



Recommendation: Install accessible play equipment

The current play equipment was not built with accessibility in mind. Thus, it is recommended that this equipment be replaced with accessible play equipment. For information on best practices for manufactured play equipment, refer to the Let's Play Project's resource titled *Let's Play, Creating accessible play spaces: A toolkit for school-based groups*.

Photo 63: Kinsmen Park – Play equipment



4.3.6 Legion Beach

Legion Beach is an older park; as a result, it was not designed with accessibility in mind, and lacks the accessibility features that are found in newer parks.

Recommendation: Provide accessible parking

Legion Beach park currently does not offer any accessible parking stalls to visitors with disabilities. It is recommended that one be constructed that is 3.7 m wide and 7.5 m deep (including a 1.2 m wide walkway). It should also be located on a level surface and be well marked by accessible signage.

Photo 64: Legion Beach – Parking lot



Recommendation: Provide accessible pathways connecting all activity areas (washrooms, benches, beach) and accessible benches and picnic tables

There are no accessible pathways linking the parking lot to other activity areas. For example, there is only a flight of stairs leading down to the beach and no ramp. There is also a lack of accessible surfaces for pathways since both loose sand and grass are inaccessible surfaces for people using mobility devices.

The bench is completely inaccessible because there is a step and sandy/grassy pathway leading to it. The picnic table is also completely inaccessible because there is only a grassy pathway leading to it, and it lacks accessibility features such as an extended table top.

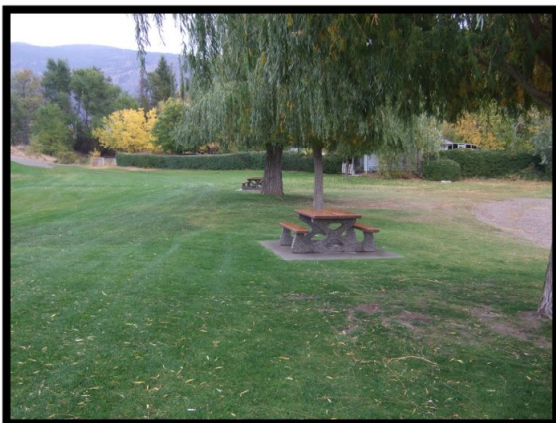
Photo 65: Legion Beach – Stairs connecting parking lot to the beach



Photo 66: Legion Beach – Inaccessible pathway leading to the bench



Photo 67: Legion Beach – Inaccessible pathway leading to inaccessible picnic table



Recommendation: Retrofit the washrooms with accessibility in mind

The consultants were not able to get into the washroom to assess its accessibility because the door was locked; however the step leading into the washroom and the narrow doorway suggests that it is completely inaccessible. It is recommended that this washroom be renovated with accessibility in mind.

Photo 68: Legion Beach – Washrooms with front step



4.3.7 Lions Park

Lions Park is another older park that was built before building standards took into consideration accessibility needs.

Recommendation: Provide accessible parking

During the time of the audit, the parking area of Lions Park was under construction, and was not included in the audit. However, it is essential that visitors with disabilities have access to accessible parking in order to visit Lions Park.

Recommendation: Renovate washrooms with accessibility in mind

The current washrooms at Lions Park were not built with accessibility in mind, and are completely inaccessible. Thus, it is recommended that they be renovated to meet current accessibility standards.

Photo 69: Lions Park – Washroom with step and gravel pathway



Recommendation: Provide accessible pathways which link key activity areas

In addition, an accessible park needs to have accessible pathways linking key activity areas such as the parking lot, washrooms, picnic tables, and play equipment. This pathway needs to have:

- an accessible surface (e.g. pavement, compacted crushed aggregate);
- minimal slope (1:20 or less) and minimal cross slope;
- a width of at least 920 mm;
- no hazards or barriers.

It would be a challenge for most people using mobility devices to travel over the grass and loose gravel surfaces of Lions Park.

Recommendation: Provide accessible picnic tables

In order for a picnic table to be accessible, there needs to be:

- an accessible pathway leading to the picnic table;
- a minimum clear space of 1200 mm surrounding the picnic table;
- an accessible surface surrounding the picnic table;
- an extended table top that allows a person seated in a wheelchair to wheel underneath.

Thus it is recommended that the picnic tables at Lions Park be made accessible.

Photo 70: Lions Park – Picnic table



Recommendation: Provide an accessible bench

The accessibility of the park’s benches would be enhanced by providing an accessible path of travel leading to the bench as well as a paved accessible surface beside the bench. This would allow a person with a disability to sit beside their friend or family member on the bench and enjoy the view of the lake. Currently, most people using mobility devices would find it very difficult (or even impossible) to wheel over to the benches.

Photo 71: Lions Park – Bench



4.3.8 Marina

Some aspects of accessibility could not be fully assessed during the site visit because the marina is currently under development. To see some useful accessibility standards that can help to inform future park developments refer to this free online resource: *Accessible Parks and Trails Assessment Toolkit (Appendices A-E)*. This toolkit complements a *Report on Accessible Parks and Trails in British Columbia* that was produced by 2010 Legacies Now.

Recommendation: Provide accessible parking

At the time of the audit, the new parking lot by the arena did not provide an accessible parking stall; thus, it is recommended that one be built. The photo below shows a potential location for a parking stall. It is recommended that the parking stall that is furthest on the left be converted to an accessible parking stall. This could be accomplished by widening the stall to be at least 3.7 meters wide, and installing a sign on a post and painting the universally recognized accessibility symbol within the stall.

Photo 72: Marina – Potential location for an accessible parking stall



Recommendation: Make minor improvements to the accessible washroom

The newly constructed accessible washrooms were built to a high standard of accessibility and include the following accessibility features: Braille signage for people with low vision; knee space beneath the sink; sufficient space for wheelchairs to maneuver, etc.

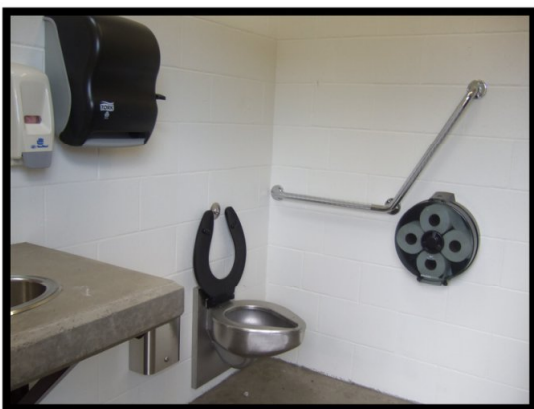
Photo 73: Marina – Braille washroom sign



While the washroom has been constructed to a high level of accessibility, there are a few recommendations to further enhance accessibility:

- Keep the waste basket outside of the accessible transfer space alongside the toilet;
- Provide a coat hook that is reachable for people seated in wheelchairs;
- Install a grab bar behind the toilet since there is no toilet water tank for people to grasp onto as they transfer from the toilet to chair and vice versa.

Photo 74: Marina – New accessible washroom



Note: at the time of the audit, the pathway to the washroom was under construction. This would need to meet accessible pathway standards.

Recommendation: Provide accessible pathways that connect all key activity areas

In order for a public park to be accessible, there needs to be a continuous path which connects all key activity areas of a park (e.g. parking, washrooms, the dock) and is free from obstructions. As much as possible, the accessible path of travel should be the same as the path of travel for the general public.

2010 Legacies Now *Accessible Parks and Trails Assessment Toolkit* sets out the following standards for accessible pathways:

- Minimal slope (1:20 or less)
- Minimal cross slope (not to exceed 3%)
- Firm, stable surface that is firm in all weather (e.g paved asphalt, concrete, boardwalk, compacted crushed aggregate)
- Minimum width of 920 mm
- No hazards or barriers
- Edge protection

At the time of the audit, the marina had a newly constructed coarse gravel walkway which did not meet accessibility standards.

Photo 75: Marina – Inaccessible loose gravel pathway



Recommendation: Provide accessible picnic table

At the end of the new gravel walkway, there is a picnic table. In order for a picnic area to be accessible, it needs to have an:

- Accessible pathway leading to it;
- Accessible surface that is firm, stable in all weather (e.g. paved asphalt, concrete, boardwalk, compacted crushed aggregate);
- Extended table top which provides knee clearance for someone using a wheelchair;
- A minimum clear space of 1200 mm around it.

It is recommended that an accessible picnic table be provided in the new marina.

Recommendation: Provide an accessible dock

2010 Legacies Now's *Accessible Parks and Trails Assessment Toolkit* sets out the following standards for accessible docks:

- An accessible pathway leading to the dock;
- An accessible ramp;
- No barriers/hazards;
- Minimum width of 1500 mm;
- Dock heights within 450-600 of the water level to allow easier access to boats;
- Edge protection is 75 mm high;
- Dock edges are emphasized with a colour contrasting strip that is a minimum of 50 mm wide;
- Tiered transfer platforms can be used to access water from dock;
- Extended rail support is helpful for added stabilization when entering boat.

The marina was still under construction during the time of the audit; however, there were steps leading down to most of the docks and the one ramp that was in place had an abrupt change in elevation, which would block access (see photo below).

Photo 76: Marina – Abrupt change in elevation on new dock



To see an example of a local dock that does not have this type of access barrier, visit the Village on the Lake dock.

4.3.9 Pioneer Walkway

Key finding: the accessible parking stall is fully accessible

The parking stall by the pioneer walkway is fully accessible because: it is located on a level surface close to the public washrooms; it has excellent signage with both a painted symbol within the stall and a sign on a post; and it meets accessible parking stall dimension requirements.

Photo 77: Pioneer Walkway – Accessible parking stall

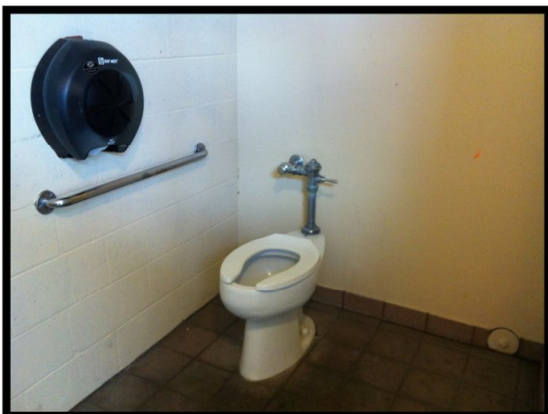


Recommendation: Make minor accessibility improvements to the washrooms

The washrooms by Pioneer Walkway were constructed to meet a high level of accessibility, and offer accessible washroom stalls, sinks with knee clearance, grab bars, etc. However, there are a couple of minor recommendations to further enhance the accessibility of the washrooms:

- Provide washroom signs with Braille/raised lettering for people with low vision;
- Provide a second grab bar behind the toilet to help people transfer between their chair and the toilet seat.

Photo 78: Pioneer Walkway – Accessible washroom



Key Finding: The Pioneer Walkway is relatively accessible

The pioneer walkway is relatively accessible since it is spacious, level and has an accessible surface. It also incorporates some great accessibility features such as an accessible bench. The accessible bench provides a paved space beside the bench for a wheelchair user to rest. This allows a person using a wheelchair to comfortably sit beside a friend or family member and enjoy the view of the lake.

Photo 79: Pioneer Walkway – Accessible bench



Recommendation: Provide more accessible benches

However, most of the other benches along the walkway lack an accessible surface beside the bench for a person seated in a wheelchair to sit beside a friend or family member. While it is possible for someone seated in a wheelchair to sit in the pathway facing their friend or family member, it is not as accessible during busy summer months because they are blocking the pathway. It is also would be more pleasant to sit beside one’s companion and have a view of the lake.

Photo 80: Pioneer Walkway – An example of an inaccessible bench



Recommendation: Provide accessible picnic tables

The existing picnic tables meet some of the requirements of an accessible picnic table because they are all connected by accessible pathways and do not have hazards around them. However, none of the existing picnic tables are fully accessible because they lack an extended table top with knee space which allows someone seated in a wheelchair to wheel under the table. In addition, accessible picnic tables should also have a minimum of 1200 mm clear space surrounding the picnic table to provide people using mobility devices room to maneuver around the table.

Photo 81: Pioneer Walkway – Inaccessible picnic table



4.3.10 Veterans Park

Key Finding: Veterans Park is relatively accessible

Veterans Park is relatively accessible because there is an accessible entrance, and an accessible pathway leading through the main part of the park where most of the benches are located. The only accessibility limitation is the fact that two of the benches are not connected by an accessible pathway.

Photo 82: Veterans Park – Entrance



Photo 83: Veterans Park – Inaccessible pathway



4.4 Sidewalks and intersections

As part of the audit, the consulting team visited sidewalks and intersections in Osoyoos' downtown commercial area and assessed the level of accessibility of sidewalks and intersections. The findings for specific locations are organized by theme areas.

Recommendation: Provide curb ramps close to accessible parking stalls on the street

In order for an accessible parking stall to be accessible, it needs to be located close to an accessible curb ramp so that a person will not have to travel far on the road to reach it. This is an issue for the accessible parking stall located beside the intersection of Park Place and Main Street.

Recommendation: Repair cracked pavement which creates safety hazard

In some parts of the city, there are cracked portions of pavement where a crosswalk and the curb ramp meet. This is a significant accessibility hazard, as wheelchair wheels can easily get caught in the gap, cause an instant stop and possible fall/injury. See below photos for an example from a curb ramp on 78th avenue by the post office, and an example from a crosswalk by Veteran's park.

Photo 84: Cracked sidewalk on 78th avenue by the post office



Photo 85: Cracked pavement as a safety hazard



Photo 86: Cracked pavement at Kingfisher Drive crosswalk (by Veteran's Park)



The lip in the pavement at the crosswalk by Family Foods/Pizza Factory also blocks access for people using mobility devices (see photo below). There is a similar accessibility challenge at the crosswalk that crosses Main Street by Kingfisher/Veteran's park.

Photo 87: Lip in pavement blocks access at crosswalk by Family Foods/Pizza Factory



Photo 88: Cracked pavement at crosswalk at 68th Ave and Main Street



Recommendation: Provide gradual slopes and curb ramps wherever possible

In some parts of the city, the pathways, sidewalks and/or curb ramps are very steep and inaccessible for some people with disabilities. One example is the ramp which provides access to Gyro Park off of Kingfisher Drive.

Photo 89: Steep ramp connecting Main Street to Gyro Park by Kingfisher Drive



The curb ramp by Pizza Factory/70th Avenue is relatively steep, and is difficult to use for someone in a wheelchair. In addition, there is no curb ramp on the 83rd Street side which connects the crosswalk to the sidewalk.

Photo 90: Steep, inaccessible curb ramp by Pizza Factory



In general, the auditing team found that many of curb ramps running along the older side of Main Street were too steep for wheelchair users.

Photo 91: Steep curb ramps along Main Street



Because of the steep terrain, some sidewalks along Main Street are difficult or impossible for many wheelchair users. For example, the area of Main Street between 85th Street and 87th Street in Osoyoos.

Recommendation: Provide sidewalks in neighbourhoods that do not have them

A number of streets in Osoyoos do not have sidewalks which would prevent many people with disabilities from being active in their neighborhoods.

Recommendation: Improve the design of curb ramps for people with low vision

None of the curb ramps within the Town of Osoyoos have incorporated the Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB)'s guidelines for curb ramps. Curb ramps at intersections can help to provide access to people using wheelchairs. However, the safe design of curb ramps is essential for people with vision loss. Properly designed curb ramps can be a significant help for people with vision loss, providing key wayfinding information. Improperly designed curb ramps are a safety hazard.

It is important to make sure that a curb ramp is properly identified, giving a person with vision loss sufficient warning that a walkway is about to end and the road is about to begin. It is also important to design wrap-around, or corner, curb ramps properly to provide adequate directional information.

An attention tactile walking surface indicator (TWSI) should be used to alert people with vision loss to the presence of curb ramps of any kind (for example, at intersections and pedestrian crosswalks). A TWSI should be set across the entire width of the curb ramp's edge, set back 150 mm to 200 mm from the curb's edge and extend a minimum of 610 mm in the direction of travel.

When located at a pedestrian crosswalk, street markings should line up with curb ramps to indicate the straight route of travel across the street. They should be colour/brightness contrasted with the road surface and the paint used should be slip resistant.

Curb ramps on opposite side of the street should be aligned on the same axis to allow someone to maintain a straight line of travel.

With a four-way intersection, there should be eight curb ramps, two for each corner, and each independent of the other. This ensures a straight route of travel for all crossing paths.

Wrap around curb ramps, should have two slopes divided by a 45 degree angle established at the centre point of the radius for the curb. The directional difference established by the two slopes should be detectable by long cane and underfoot.

Recommendation: Provide accessible pedestrian signals for people with low vision, hearing loss at major intersections (e.g. Main Street and Park Place)

None of the crosswalks within the Town of Osoyoos that were examined provided accessible pedestrian signals that meet CNIB's guidelines. An accessible pedestrian signal (APS) provides auditory, visual and tactile information so that a person with vision and/or hearing loss will know when it is legal to cross at a set of traffic lights. APS systems should incorporate the following:

- A tactile, colour contrasted arrow which unambiguously indicates the direction of travel associated with the push button;
- A push button should be faced on the side of the pole facing the pedestrian waiting area, aligned so that the face is parallel to the associated crosswalk;
- An acoustic locator tone;

- A confirmation of activation which indicates the system has been successfully activated by the push button;
- An acoustic and tactile/vibrotactile walk signal which indicates when it is legal to cross the street.

4.5 Other community facilities

This section reports on the accessibility of other community facilities including the Art Gallery, Fire Hall, Old Interior Health Building, and Seniors Centre.

4.5.1 Art Gallery

Recommendation: Improve accessibility of staircase at main entrance

The current staircase at the main entrance lacks tactile warning strips on the stair nosings which warn people with low vision about a change in elevation. According to Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), nosings should: have a colour/brightness contrasted strip; have a maximum depth of 50 mm; and be applied to the leading edge of the tread and the vertical face of the nosing. Accessibility could also be enhanced by providing round handrails which are easier to grasp on for people with limited hand dexterity and strength.

Photo 92: Art Gallery – Main entrance



Recommendation: Provide round handrails alongside ramp entrance

A ramp provides an accessible entrance leading into the Art Gallery. Accessibility could be enhanced by providing round hand rails which are easier to grasp onto for people with limited hand dexterity and strength.

Key finding: The main viewing area of the Art Gallery is relatively accessible

Within the Art Gallery, the artwork is displayed on the main floor. Because of the accessible entrance, and spacious aisles, the art displays are relatively accessible for people using mobility devices.

Recommendation: Provide an accessible washroom for employees, volunteers, visitors with disabilities

The Art Gallery currently lacks an accessible washroom. It is recommended that one be provided for volunteers, employees, visitors with disabilities. Refer to the BC Building Code Access Handbook for guidelines around creating an accessible washroom.

Recommendation: Provide access to the ceramics room for community members with disabilities

The ceramics room is currently inaccessible for many people with disabilities, because visitors need to enter through the front entrance to the Gallery and use a flight of stairs to access to the Ceramics Room, or enter through a side door where there is an abrupt change in elevation,

The accessibility of the side door could be enhanced by providing:

- A ramp for people using mobility devices;
- Lever style handles for people with limited hand strength/dexterity;
- A doorway that is at least 915 mm wide to accommodate larger wheelchairs.

Photo 93: Art Gallery – Ceramics room side door



Another potentially accessible entrance is the bay doors which open at the back of the ceramics room. Because of the age and condition of the bay doors, they are opened very infrequently. According to staff it takes about three people to open these, and they have to move around a lot of shelving to make it possible.

Photo 94: Art Gallery – Bay door entrance



Recommendation: Install elevator to provide access to the second floor

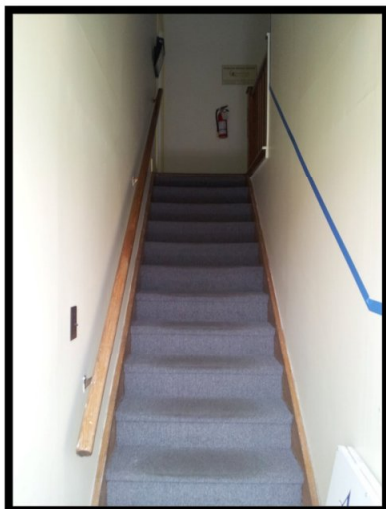
There is important community art and meeting space located up on the second floor of the Art Gallery. This space is inaccessible because there is no elevator connecting the two floors, and Art Gallery visitors need to use both an exterior staircase and an interior staircase leading up to the second floor.

Because the interior staircase is relatively narrow (36 inches wide), there is not enough space to install a platform stair lift that could be used by wheelchairs. Thus, it is recommended that an elevator be installed to provide access.

Recommendation: Add tactile warning strips to the staircase going up to the second floor

The accessibility of the staircase could be enhanced by providing tactile warning strips for people with low vision.

Photo 95: Art Gallery – Staircase leading to second floor



Recommendation: Improve outside side staircase which connects to the second floor.

Adding tactile warning strips to the side staircase would also improve accessibility for people with low vision.

Photo 96: Art Gallery – Side entrance to staircase leading up to the second floor



4.5.2 Fire Hall

As part of the audit, the consulting team visited the fire hall to explore how accessible it would be for volunteers with disabilities. Because the fire hall was not constructed with accessibility in mind, the accessibility throughout the facility was relatively limited.

Recommendation: Install an elevator which provides access to the second floor of the Fire Hall as well as Town Hall

Since most of the Fire Hall's meeting spaces are located upstairs, it would be difficult for a person with a disability to become part of the Fire Hall's volunteer community without being able to access the upstairs. Thus it is recommended that an elevator be installed which provides access to both the Fire Hall and the upstairs of Town Hall.

Recommendation: Retrofit washrooms with accessibility in mind

Neither the washroom on the ground level nor the upstairs washroom were built with accessibility in mind; thus they are completely inaccessible. It is recommended that the washrooms be renovated to meet current accessibility standards.

4.5.3 Old Interior Health Building

The previous location of Interior Health was included in this audit because this space might be repurposed for other community uses (e.g. location of the food bank)

This site is an older building that was constructed prior to the BC Building Code taking into consideration access needs. As a result, there are a number of accessibility barriers throughout the facility including the following:

- The lack of an accessible washroom;
- Doorways that are not 915 mm wide;
- Knob style handles that are difficult to grasp onto for someone with limited hand dexterity or strength.

If this community space is repurposed in the future, it is recommended that it be renovated to address these accessibility challenges.

4.5.4 Osoyoos Seniors Centre

Recommendation: Improve signage on accessible parking stalls

There are three accessible parking stalls in the parking lot. Accessibility could be enhanced by improving visibility of parking stalls by providing a sign on a post, and in some cases repainting the painted symbol within the stall. This makes it less likely that people will accidentally park in these stalls.

Photo 97: Osoyoos Seniors Centre – Accessible parking stall



Recommendation: Add tactile warning strips to staircase

The current staircase by the entrance lacks tactile warning strips on the stair nosings which warns people with low vision about a change in elevation. According to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), nosings should have a colour/brightness contrasted strip, a maximum depth of 50 mm, and be applied to the leading edge of the tread and the vertical face of the nosing.

Photo 98: Osoyoos Seniors Centre – Staircase



Key finding: Main entrance is relatively accessible

The main entrance to the Seniors Centre is relatively accessible since it has a gradual ramp leading up to it as well as an automatic door opener.

Photo 99: Osoyoos Seniors Centre – Accessible ramp and automatic door opener



Key finding: Newly renovated upstairs washrooms meet a high level of accessibility

The newly renovated upstairs washrooms were built to a high level of accessibility and have accessible features such as grab bars, lever handles, knee space under the sink and sufficient space for wheelchairs to maneuver. The only limitation is that the toilet paper is a bit challenging to reach. It is recommended that this be moved to be closer to the toilet.

Photo 100: Osoyoos Seniors Centre – Accessible washroom



Key finding: Upstairs kitchen is relatively accessible

The kitchen has been designed with accessibility in mind and offers a number of accessible features such as:

- A stove with controls on the front which are reachable for someone seated in a wheelchair;
- A moveable island which allows there to be accessible paths of travel
- Dishes and other supplies are kept within reach of people seated in wheelchairs.

Recommendation: Provide knee space under the sink and lever handles for the sink faucets

The accessibility of the sink could be enhanced by providing knee space underneath the sink that allows someone with a wheelchair to wheel underneath. In addition, it is recommended that the water faucet handles be replaced with lever style handles which are easier to use for someone with limited hand strength and dexterity.

Photo 101: Osoyoos Seniors Centre – Upstairs kitchen



Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of installing a ramp for the stage

The stage is currently inaccessible for people who use mobility devices. Thus, it is recommended that the Town explore the feasibility of installing a ramp for people with disabilities who would like to perform.

Photo 102: Osoyoos Seniors Centre – Stage



Recommendation: Improve access to downstairs

The downstairs is difficult to access for someone with limited mobility, since most people use an interior staircase to go down and use the pool tables, etc. Technically, there is an accessible entrance from the outside which is connected to the outside ramp; however this is difficult to access because of the locked gate and the alarm system and is rarely opened.

Photo 103: Osoyoos Seniors Centre – Gate by downstairs entrance



5. OVERALL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes some of the key reoccurring recommendations that came out of the audit findings across the different sites.

5.1 Provide accessible parking

Some of the sites included in this audit provided designated accessible parking spaces, while other sites did not. It is essential for people with disabilities to have access to accessible parking close to main entrances of amenities.

In some cases, accessible parking was provided but it had some limitations. Some common recommendations for accessible parking include:

- Improve the visibility of accessible parking stalls by providing a sign on a post as well as a painted symbol in the parking stall (this will make it less likely that others will accidentally park there);
- Avoid locating accessible parking stalls on slopes which can be hazardous for people with disabilities transferring between their vehicle to the chair and vice versa.

5.2 Improve the accessibility of staircases and ramps

Most of the staircases and ramps examined throughout this audit were not designed to meet the needs of people with low vision or people who are blind. In order for staircases and ramps to be safe for someone with low vision, they need to incorporate tactile warning strips at the top and bottom of staircases/ramps, and on each individual stair nosing.

In addition, it is important to provide round handrails alongside staircases and ramps that are easy to grasp onto for people with limited hand strength and dexterity. Many of the older buildings had rectangular handrails.

Some of the ramps examined during the audit were too steep. It is recommended that ramps should have a gradual slope with a maximum slope of 1:20 wherever possible. When ramps are long, it is also important to provide level landings at regular intervals.

5.3 Provide accessible washrooms

Many of the park washrooms assessed during this accessibility audit were older washrooms that were built before the BC Building Code took into account accessibility needs; thus, they did not meet the basic standards of accessibility. These washrooms need to be retrofitted with accessibility in mind.

While new washrooms were built to a high level of accessibility, there were a few reoccurring recommendations that emerged across the audit of various new washrooms. These recommendations include:

- Provide a lower coat hook that is reachable for people seated in a wheelchair;
- Provide a second grab bar behind the toilet if the toilet does not have a fixed water tank that people can grasp onto for extra support when transferring from the chair to the toilet seat and vice versa;
- Provide washroom signage in Braille/raised lettering for people with low vision.

5.4 Provide accessible paths connecting key activity areas in parks

Most of the parks visited during this audit did not have accessible pathways connecting key activity areas. In order for people with disabilities to be able to access a park, it is necessary for there to be accessible paths of travel connecting different elements of the park. An accessible park pathway needs to meet the following standards:

- Minimal slope (1:20 or less);
- Minimal cross slope (not to exceed 3%);
- Firm, stable surface that is firm in all weather conditions (e.g. paved asphalt, concrete, boardwalk, crushed aggregate);
- A minimum width of 920 mm;
- No hazards or barriers;
- Edge protection.

(Note: grass is not an accessible surface and is very challenging, if not impossible, for many people using mobility devices to use).

5.5 Provide accessible benches

Most of the benches examined during this audit were not fully accessible. In order for a bench to be fully accessible, it needs to be connected to the rest of the park by an accessible pathway. In addition, it needs to have a clear, accessible surface beside it so that a person using a wheelchair can sit beside their companion and enjoy the same view of the lake.

5.6 Provide accessible picnic tables

None of the picnic tables examined during this audit were fully accessible. Accessible picnic tables have the following accessibility features:

- an accessible pathway leading to the picnic table;
- a minimum clear space of 1200 mm surrounding the picnic table;
- a clear space with an accessible surface that is firm, stable in all weather conditions (e.g. paved asphalt, concrete, boardwalk, compacted crushed aggregate);
- an extended table top which allows a person seated in a wheelchair to wheel underneath.

5.7 Provide accessible crosswalks and intersections

As part of the audit, the consultants identified a number of areas in the downtown core where cracked pavement/curb ramps would pose a safety hazard for people using wheelchairs. It is recommended that the Town repair damaged sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps.

In addition, none of the intersections examined for this project were fully accessible for people with low vision. It is recommended that the Town of Osoyoos explore the feasibility of adopting CNIB's guidelines for accessible curb ramps and pedestrian crossing signals.

6. CONCLUSION AND OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town of Osoyoos has demonstrated its commitment to improving accessibility by:

- Establishing community accessibility as a priority issue.
- Taking steps to improve accessibility of community facilities over time (e.g. renovating washrooms, adding ramps and elevators).
- Hiring an accessibility audit consultant to assess the current level of accessibility in municipal facilities.

Because of the broad scope of recommendations that are presented in this report, it may not be possible to implement everything at once. As a result, SPARC BC has identified some strategies that could help the Town of Osoyoos work towards its goal of becoming the most accessible resort community over time.

6.1 Start with the low cost changes

There is a broad range of recommendations in this report, and they range from inexpensive (or even free) to larger scale capital improvement projects which require considerable funding. One of the quickest ways to see results is to start with the low cost changes. Some examples of free/cheap changes include:

- Lowering the height of a coat hook in an accessible washroom so that it is reachable for someone seated in a wheelchair;
- Adding Braille/raised lettering signs to accessible washrooms;
- Replacing knob-style door handles with lever handles.

6.2 Start with higher priority recommendations

While it would be ideal to upgrade all of the sites at once so that they meet the highest standard of accessibility, this may not be possible because of funding/resource limitations. Thus, it is recommended that the Town of Osoyoos start by identifying which of the accessibility recommendations should be implemented first. Some questions that could be asked when identifying which recommendations should be highest priority include:

- Does this accessibility barrier create a safety hazard?
- Which sites are used by the greatest number of users?
- Could the implementing the recommendation help attract tourists with disabilities?

6.3 Consider accessibility early on during the initial design phase of a new development

It is generally more cost effective to consider accessibility early on during the design phase of a project because it limits the need for costly renovations/retrofits after the fact. Some examples of things that cost more money to do after the fact include:

- Renovating an inaccessible washroom;
- Replacing newly installed infrastructure (i.e. inaccessible picnic tables, benches, curb ramps).

6.4 Develop a plan for addressing more expensive changes over time

It is likely that some of the more expensive accessibility modifications will need a plan for addressing them over time as time and resources permit. It is recommended that the Town of Osoyoos identify which of the higher cost projects should be considered highest priority and develop a phased approach for how to address them over time.