

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Creating a barrier free city for all



ACCESSIBILITY

#BarrierFreeYXE

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that our community is located on Treaty 6 Territory and the Traditional Homeland of the Métis.

Indigenous people including Cree, Dakota and Saulteaux descent have called the area now referred to as Saskatoon home for thousands of years. Today, Saskatoon is home to Indigenous people from a diversity of cultures and language groups.

The City of Saskatoon recognizes the distinct order of government of First Nations and Métis and is committed to maintaining strong relationships through meaningful dialogue with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Strengthening cooperation and mutual support by working in partnership with Indigenous communities toward respective community goals and objectives is vital to fostering more inclusive communities.

DRAFT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Saskatoon extends its deepest gratitude to all those whose dedication and care have shaped this Accessibility Plan. This work could not have been accomplished without the generous engagement of residents, community organizations, accessibility advocates, and numerous individuals who share a vision of a more inclusive, barrier-free Saskatoon. Your voices, wisdom, and lived experiences are the heart of this effort.

We are sincerely thankful to everyone who contributed their time and expertise—whether through designing, promoting, collecting data, or courageously sharing personal stories and practical solutions. Your involvement brings warmth and authenticity to the City’s commitment to “nothing about us without us.”

We wish to recognize, in particular, the many organizations and individuals whose thoughtful guidance and unwavering support have guided us on this journey. Your commitment inspires us to continue striving for a city where everyone belongs.

Thank you to the **538 residents** who shared your lived experiences with us.

The City of Saskatoon thanks the **Accessibility Plan Advisory Committee** for their expertise and guidance in ensuring this plan reflects our community’s needs.

Thank you to the local organizations who helped promote our project:

- AIM - Ability in Me
- Alvin Buckwold Child Development Program SHA
- Alzheimer Society - SK
- Aspira Retirement Living
- Autism Services - SK
- Bayshore Home Health
- Bethany Manor
- Canadian Deafblind Assoc. - SK
- Canadian Mental Health - SK
- Community Living Association Saskatoon Inc
- Crohn's and Colitis Canada - SK
- Cystic Fibrosis - SK
- Diabetes Canada - SK
- Epilepsy Saskatoon
- Federation of Sovereign Indian Nations
- Friendship Inn
- Global Gathering Place
- Ilarion Ukrainian Orthodox Residence
- Inclusion Saskatchewan
- International Women of Saskatoon
- Jubilee Residences Inc
- Kinsmen Children's Centre
- Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan
- LutherCare Communities
- MS Canada - SK
- Oliver Lodge
- Parkinson Canada - SK
- Preston Park Retirement Residence
- SARCAN
- SaskAbilities
- Saskatchewan Alternative Initiatives
- Saskatchewan Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured
- Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association
- Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc.
- Saskatoon and Region Personal Care Home Association
- Saskatoon Council on Aging
- Saskatoon Housing Authority
- Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre
- Saskatoon Open Door Society
- Saskatoon Tribal Council
- Schizophrenia Society of Saskatchewan
- Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Inc.
- St. Volodymyr Villa Corporation
- Trans Sask
- Trinity Manor
- United Way of Saskatoon
- University of Saskatchewan Student Services
- Warm 'n' Cozy Care Homes
- White Buffalo Youth Lodge
- YMCA / YWCA of Saskatoon

Thank you to the following organizations that facilitated community conversations:

Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Saskatoon Open Door Society

Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

Saskatoon Indian and Metis Friendship Centre



HOW THE CITY PLANS TO MOVE FORWARD

The City of Saskatoon is committed to building a barrier-free city by focusing on accessibility, inclusion, and independence. Since 2008, we've been working to make our spaces, services, and programs more inclusive through the Accessibility Action Plan. Over the past 16 years, we've improved sidewalks, cleared snow more effectively, upgraded transit, made buildings and playgrounds more accessible, enhanced our website, and provided staff training. These changes were shaped by feedback from the community. As people shared their ideas, the plan grew and got better. We will continue to listen, learn, and adapt so that everyone feels welcome and can take part in daily life without barriers.

The City of Saskatoon's Accessibility Plan builds on work already underway and focuses on key areas where barriers to accessibility exist. These areas—called accessibility domains—are based on the Accessible Saskatchewan Act and include: built environment, transportation, information and communication, employment, service delivery, attitudes, and procurement.

This plan helps guide the City's efforts to identify and remove barriers in each of these areas.

See Appendix A for to learn more about the Accessible Saskatchewan Act and the City's seven accessibility domains.

INPUT FROM SASKATOON RESIDENTS

The City of Saskatoon worked with people who have disabilities and older adults to develop a survey that was distributed in early 2025. Residents were asked to share their experiences of accessibility barriers through an online survey and community talks. Over 538 people, including those from diverse communities – Blind and Low Vision residents, Deaf and Hard of Hearing residents, Indigenous residents, and Racialized and Newcomer residents - expressed their challenges and hopes for a barrier-free city. These lived experiences shaped this Accessibility plan.

Top five areas for Accessibility improvements



1. Snow and Ice Removal

This was the most urgent concern. Many people said that when sidewalks and crosswalks aren't cleared properly, they feel unsafe or unable to leave their homes—especially those using mobility devices or who walk slowly.



2. Sidewalks and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Broken sidewalks, missing curb ramps, and uneven surfaces were common issues. These barriers make it difficult for people to move around safely and independently.



3. Public Washrooms

A lack of accessible washrooms in public spaces was a major concern. People said existing facilities often don't meet their needs.



4. Outdoor and Recreation Spaces

Parks, trails, and recreation centres like pools and gyms were often described as hard to access, especially in winter or for those with mobility challenges.



5. Access to Information

Many people said it was hard to find or understand City information. Websites, printed materials, and phone services were not always easy to use or accessible.

See Appendix B for a short summary of what residents shared in the survey and community discussions. Additional and more specific results can be found in Appendices C-J.

DOMAIN 1: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Sometimes, buildings and public spaces are designed in ways that make it hard for some people to use them. For example, stairs without ramps or narrow doorways can make it difficult for people with physical disabilities to get around. These problems aren't usually done on purpose—they happen when designers assume that everyone moves, sees, hears, or thinks the same way. People with intellectual disabilities might find spaces confusing or hard to understand if they are too complicated or don't give clear information. The City is working to find and fix these barriers so that everyone can feel welcome, respected, and included.

Accessible Indoor Spaces: The City's Next Steps

Conduct accessibility audits of City buildings

- The City will continue to do wholistic reviews of City buildings to see where barriers exist.
- The City will work with experts – including the Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the Transportation and Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion departments—to ensure accessibility is done well.

Develop clear design standards for new and existing spaces

- The City is working to make sure every project follows accessibility standards and regulations from the start.

Complete most important projects that remove barriers and improve access

- The City will be reviewing how we provide services in our indoor spaces to make them more accessible and create more inclusive City standards.
- The City commits to giving staff more training so they understand accessibility better and can help design spaces that work for everyone.

See Appendix C for resident stories that shaped this plan and the City's ongoing efforts to make indoor spaces more accessible.

Accessible Outdoor Spaces: The City's Next Steps

Improve snow clearing

- The City is committed to keeping its Sidewalk Clearing Bylaw updated to make sure that sidewalks are clear of snow and debris.
- The City will evaluate the feasibility of improving snow clearing response times.

- The City will maintain its 24/7 Customer Care Center hotline (306-975-2476) to provide support for concerns about sidewalk conditions.

Continue to expand repairs to sidewalks and pathways

- The City is planning to maintain and improve its approach to expand the number of sidewalk and pedestrian-accessible curb ramp installations.
- The City is committed to making sure that all upgraded and new pathways are built to current accessibility standards.

Improve signs, sidewalks, and curb ramps—especially in places where they are still missing

- The City will work with the City's Active Transportation group – which represents the views of residents - to include accessibility in all plans and projects.

Enhance accessibility in parks and recreation areas

- The City is improving playground design standards by continuing audits so all play equipment is accessible for everyone.
- The City will work to upgrade benches and picnic tables so that they are accessible to everyone.



See Appendix D for resident stories that shaped this plan and the City's ongoing efforts to make outdoor spaces more accessible.

DOMAIN 2: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Accessible Information and Communication: The City's Next Steps

Information and communication accessibility barriers happen when content—like websites, documents, or announcements—is designed in ways that hinder or exclude people with disabilities. This could be videos without captions, text that screen readers can't interpret, or language that's too complex. Often people make assumptions about how others access and understand information, preventing some people from participating fully and confidently in City life.

Develop a new Digital Equity Strategy to ensure everyone can access our digital services

- The City is developing Smart City and AI Strategies that will enhance digital accessibility.
- The City is developing a plan to improve the accessibility of all external and internal digital documents.

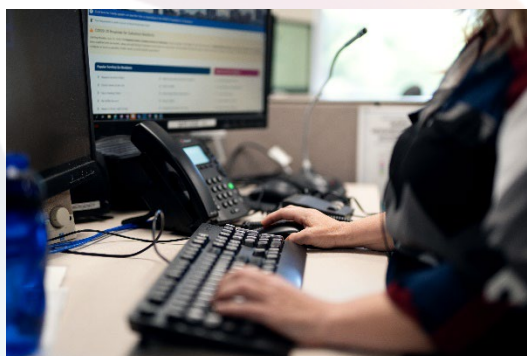
Update our website this fall to make it easier to search and navigate

- The City is actively working to update its public-facing website to enhance accessibility and user-friendliness.

Build smarter systems and better tools behind the scenes to help staff serve the public in more inclusive ways

- The City is committed to providing services that are more accessible, efficient, and people-focused.
- The City is working to gather more feedback from residents about their experiences in City Hall lobby and beyond, to understand how to best improve accessibility.
- The City has plans to offer more in-person training to help frontline staff better understand accessibility.
- The City is creating clear guides and helpful scripts for frontline staff so they can better support everyone and remove accessibility barriers.

See Appendix E for resident stories that shaped this plan and the City's ongoing efforts towards accessible information and communications.



DOMAIN 3: TRANSPORTATION

An accessibility barrier in transportation is a design or system feature—like buses without ramps, stops without audio announcements, or routes that don't go frequently enough in key areas—that makes it difficult or impossible for some people to travel independently. These barriers can limit access to work, education, healthcare, and community life, directly affecting a person's quality of life and opportunities. The City has worked to improve inclusive transportation to ensure everyone can move through their day with dignity and ease.

Accessible Transportation: The City's Next Steps

Embed accessibility into planning and operations

- The City is committed to a bus network redesign over the next three years, creating a better network that allows for more accessible and timely travel.
- The City plans to provide electronic visible displays at bus stops to provide busing information.
- The City is working to include audible announcements on all buses.
- The City is committed to developing new ways for people to get information about buses. We know not everyone has a data plan or can use apps or websites when they're out and about, so the City is finding solutions that work for everyone.

Work together to improve sidewalks, snow clearing, signs, and directions around bus stops so they're safer and easier for everyone to use

- The City is developing a standard bus stop design to provide a consistent level of accessibility.
- The City plans to improve the signage around bus stops.

Improve Access Transit to make it easier to use

- The City plans to improve Access Transit by updating who can use it, adding more vehicles, and creating an online booking system.
- Increase the number of wheelchair-accessible taxis licences and simplify how people apply for accessible parking permits.
- The City will be collaborating with providers to make sure that wait times for wheelchair accessible taxis are fair and propose bylaw changes if required.

Keep Ramps and Pathways Clear

- City departments are working together to improve snow removal from ramps and pathways so they remain usable year-round.
- Community input has helped shape this work, including walkabouts with residents to better understand real-life barriers and experiences.



See Appendix F for resident stories that shaped this plan and the City's ongoing efforts to make transportation more accessible.

DOMAIN 4: SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animal barriers often come from confusion or different rules that make it difficult for people with disabilities to bring their service animals into public or private spaces. Businesses may struggle to balance legal obligations with concerns about safety, hygiene, or customer reactions—especially when people don't understand the difference between service animals and pets. The City can play a stronger role in recognizing the vital contribution of service animals to independence and wellbeing.

Service Animals: The City's Next Steps

Review best practices and prepare for new provincial rules to keep The City's approach current

Collaborate with staff, health professionals, and community members to ensure our spaces and services are welcoming and accessible to residents that use service animals

- The City is committed to strengthening in-person interactions by ensuring training in service animal accommodation.

Support people who rely on service animals by making sure our policies and spaces meet their needs

- The City successfully hired people that use service animals and as those requests come forward the City is committed to supporting employees that use a service animal.

See Appendix G for resident stories that shaped this plan and the City's ongoing efforts to make spaces more welcoming and inclusive for people and their service animals.



DOMAIN 5: CITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Accessible city services are essential to ensuring that all residents can participate fully in community life. Barriers often arise when systems, spaces, or communications aren't designed with accessibility in mind. The City is taking important steps to change this—by updating its purchasing policy to include accessibility as a core principle, creating clearer guidance for staff, and improving how people register for programs and access information. These efforts will help make services more inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the diverse needs of residents.

Accessible City Services and Programs: The City's Next Steps

Update the City's purchasing policy to include accessibility

- The City plans to adopt a new Accessibility Principle and roll out training to help staff build knowledge and confidence.
- The City will be actively working on making updates to our purchasing policy by adding a ninth new core principle focused on incorporating accessibility with purchasing.

Prioritize accessibility in both service delivery and purchasing processes.

- The City is creating clear scripts and helpful guides so staff can better understand the accessibility needs of residents. This will help improve service and make sure everyone feels respected and supported.

Improve how people register for programs and access information

- The City is making sure events are held in accessible spaces, with clear and easy-to-read information. We're also offering hybrid options so more people can join in person or online.



See Appendix H for resident stories that shaped this plan and the City's ongoing efforts to make services, supports and products more accessible.

DOMAIN 6: FINDING AND APPLYING FOR EMPLOYMENT WITH THE CITY OF SASKATOON

Accessibility barriers in employment arises when recruitment and promotion systems are designed in ways that unintentionally exclude people with disabilities. This can include assumptions about capability, interview formats, or job postings that overlook inclusive language, adaptive formats, or alternative promotion channels. The City is a great employer, and improvements to meaningful work can affect a person's economic independence, sense of belonging, and ability to contribute fully to civic life.

Accessible Employment: The City's Next Steps

Improve job postings to make them clearer and more welcoming to candidates with disabilities

- The City is working to improve its website so it's easier for everyone to find and apply for jobs. It's also exploring new ways to share job opportunities to make sure more people know about them, including those who may face barriers.
- This includes using inclusive language and making sure the format works for everyone.

Strengthen hiring practices and host events with community partners to share how the City hires

- The City is working with groups like SaskAbilities to support people with disabilities through job placements, training, and other supports to help them succeed at work.

Ensure everyone has a fair chance to work with the City

- The City is dedicated to making job opportunities easier to find and apply for by using clear, fair language in job postings and making sure they're accessible to everyone.

See Appendix I for resident stories that shaped this plan and the City's ongoing efforts to make finding and gaining employment more accessible.



DOMAIN 7: ATTITUDES AND BIASES AMONG CITY EMPLOYEES

Accessibility barriers are often rooted in attitudes and biases occurs when people—intentionally or not—hold beliefs or behaviours that diminish or exclude older adults or people with disabilities. These barriers often show up as dismissive interactions, assumptions about capability, or inconsistent support. Such biases can erode trust, reduce participation, and make city spaces and services feel unwelcoming.

The City continues to shift culture, improve emotional intelligence, and ensure that every interaction reflects dignity and respect. Barriers for people with disabilities come from attitudes—not just systems. Misunderstandings, assumptions, or lack of awareness can make spaces feel unwelcoming, even when no harm is intended.

The City is working to change this by expanding education and awareness across the organization. Training in American Sign Language (ASL), disability awareness, and accessible technology like closed captioning in virtual meetings helps staff better understand and support residents. By encouraging self-declaration and listening to employee feedback, the City is building a culture where accessibility is part of everyday thinking—not just policy.

Unpacking Biases, Improving Attitudes: The City's Next Steps

Expand education and awareness across the organization

- The City is building a more inclusive workplace by offering training like American Sign Language (ASL) and disability awareness sessions. These programs help frontline staff better understand and support people with disabilities and older adults, making services more welcoming for everyone.

Use tools like closed captioning in virtual meetings to support accessibility

- The City is using technology to make things more accessible, such as adding closed captions to Teams meetings.
- The City will focus on its self-declaration campaign to help people share their accessibility needs in a safe and private way. This will help us plan better and create more inclusive services.

Use employee feedback to build better strategies that support accessibility and fairness in the workplace

- The City commits to listening to staff to help improve services and create a more inclusive environment for everyone.



See Appendix J for resident stories that shaped this plan and the City's ongoing efforts to make access to services more supportive and inclusive.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Accessibility is not a one-time achievement—it is a continuous journey. One that requires listening, learning, and adapting together. Through co-designed approaches and meaningful collaboration with community members, especially those with lived experience, we are shaping a city that reflects the strength and diversity of all its people. Together, we are creating a future that honours our shared responsibility to leave no one behind. A barrier-free Saskatoon!

To provide additional feedback on this draft plan, please go

www.saskatoon.ca/accessibilityfeedback

Appendix A – Understanding the Accessible Saskatchewan Act

The following information is a summary of information provided by the Government of Saskatchewan. For more details related to the Accessible Saskatchewan Act, please visit: accessiblesk.saskatchewan.ca

The Accessible Saskatchewan Act is a new provincial law that came into effect on December 3, 2023. Its purpose is to help make Saskatchewan a more inclusive and accessible place for everyone — especially for people with disabilities and older adults.

What does the Accessible Saskatchewan Act do?

The Act sets out a framework to identify, remove, and prevent barriers that make it harder for people to fully participate in their communities. These barriers might be physical (such as stairs without ramps), technological (such websites that don't work with screen readers - software that reads text out loud), or attitudinal (such as assumptions about what people with disabilities can or can't do).

Key Areas of the Accessible Saskatchewan Act:

The Act focuses on seven key areas, the City calls accessibility domains:

- **Built Environment** – Making buildings, sidewalks, and public spaces easier to access.
- **Transportation** – Improving how people get around the city.
- **Information and Communication** – Making sure everyone can find and understand City information.
- **Employment** – Helping people with disabilities apply for and succeed in jobs.
- **Service Delivery** – Making City programs and services easier for everyone to use.
- **Attitudes** – Promoting respect, understanding, and inclusion.
- **Procurement** – Ensuring the goods and services that the City purchases are accessible to everyone.

Who does the Accessible Saskatchewan apply to?

The Act applies to public sector organizations such as:

- Cities and towns
- Schools and universities
- Hospitals and health authorities

- Government departments and agencies

These organizations are required to consult with the public, especially people who use their services, to understand what barriers exist. Based on this input, they must create accessibility plans that outline how they will remove or reduce those barriers.

What's in an accessibility plan?

Each plan must:

- Be developed with input from people who have lived experience with disability and accessibility barriers
- Identify current barriers in services, programs, or facilities
- Set out actions to address those barriers
- Be reviewed and updated at least every three years

What values guide the Accessible Saskatchewan Act?

The Act is built on values that promote:

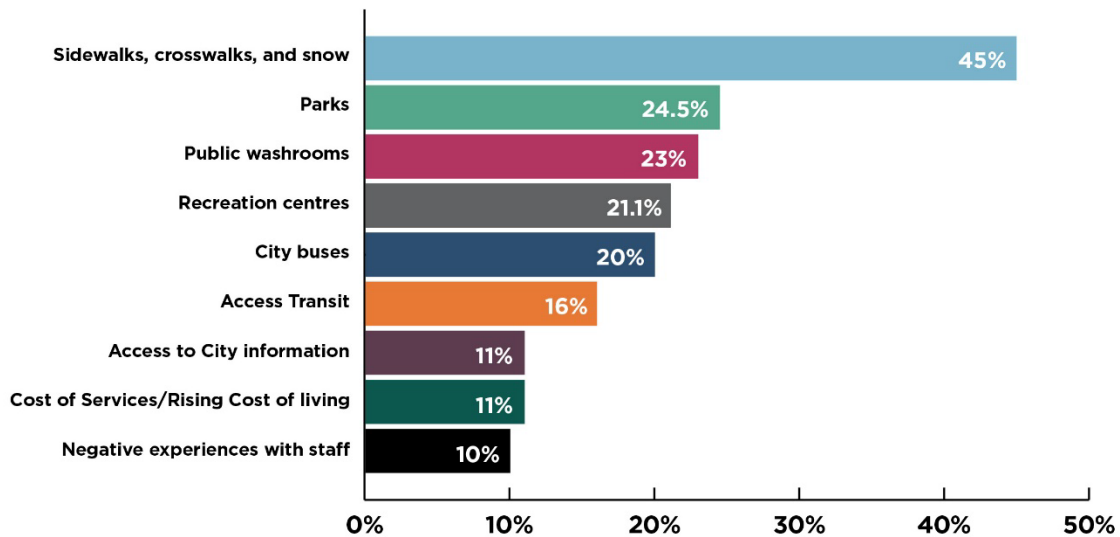
- **Inclusion** – making sure everyone can participate fully
- **Universal design** – designing spaces, services, and tools that work for as many people as possible from the start
- **Collaboration** – working together with communities and people with lived experience

What's happening now?

The Province is still developing the detailed standards and regulations under the Act, while some communities — like Saskatoon and Regina — are taking early steps to lead the way.

Appendix B – Most Common Accessibility Barriers: Residents' Concerns

Barriers people face when using City Services



Appendix C – Stories and Experiences from Residents: Accessibility and Indoor Spaces

“Not all public buildings have automatic doors or elevators, so it is difficult to get into places for me.”

“We don’t have indoor playgrounds for kids with disabilities, only some that require payment. That can be too expensive for some families. Even the Leisure centre is only open to people who have a Leisure Center card, so not everyone can access.”

“Another thing that bothers me is finding doors. Going up to the store and it’s like, where is the door? Or which is the IN door and which is the OUT door? You hear the door open, it’s like, is that the OUT door or is that the IN door? Because each store is different. You never know.”

Creating indoor spaces that are accessible is key to building a city where everyone feels welcome and included. These spaces include places where we live, work, and spend time together—such as community centres, homes, offices, and public buildings. Improving accessibility helps create spaces that everyone can use—safely, comfortably, and independently. This becomes even more important as our population gets older and more residents experience changing mobility needs.

Listening to the Community

Residents who answered the accessibility survey and joined community conversations said they’ve noticed improvements over the years. However, they also shared that some indoor public spaces are still hard to use. This is particularly true for Saskatoon’s older buildings, built before or with old accessibility standards. Below are examples of the challenges described by respondents:

- **Navigation and signs:** Many people had trouble finding their way in public buildings because signs were hard to read, lighting was poor, or layouts were confusing.

- **Doors and entrances:** Heavy doors, limited or broken automatic openers, and narrow entryways made it hard for people using mobility aids to get in.
- **Elevators and lifts:** Some older buildings had no elevators, or lifts were unreliable, leaving people unable to reach certain floors.
- **Seating and rest areas:** There weren't enough places to sit and rest, making it hard for those who need breaks to get around indoors.
- **Audio and visual access:** Not enough support for people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind, or have low vision—like assistive listening devices or braille signs.
- **Temperature and lighting:** Spaces were sometimes too hot, too cold, or had harsh lighting, which could be uncomfortable or overwhelming.
- **Accessible washrooms:** Some accessible washrooms were hard to find, locked, or used for storage, so they weren't available when needed.

These additional insights from residents highlight the many facets of indoor accessibility, emphasizing the need for thoughtful design, regular maintenance, and ongoing dialogue with the community to create welcoming spaces for everyone.

Making Indoor Spaces More Accessible

City teams across departments—including Building Standards, Facilities, and Planning and Development—are playing an important role in making indoor spaces safer, more welcoming, and easier for everyone to use.

Here are a few examples of progress so far:

- Upgraded public facilities to improve accessibility
- Built accessibility into housing programs
- Ensured new developments meet provincial and national accessibility standards
- Shared tools and guidance to help builders go beyond the basics

Improving accessibility is a shared effort. By working together, we can create spaces that include everyone—now and in the future.

Appendix D – Stories and Experiences from Residents: Accessibility and Outdoor Spaces

“I still find some sidewalks in my neighbourhood still have no ramps, forcing me to turn around and seek a driveway to get on the road with my mobility scooter. Some of the ramps built, especially in Stonebridge have drop offs that cause the scooter to buck violently hurting my back.”

“City workers helped me get across and go around the construction and I wanted to say that I appreciated that.”

“Difficulty walking in City parks in the winter. The paths aren't shovelled and the snowplows leave big ridges along the road that are a barrier to entering the parks. This makes it really difficult for those of us with mobility problems.”

Sidewalks, streets, parks, and pathways are all part of the outdoor spaces we use every day. These places help connect our neighborhoods and support daily life. It's important that they are easy for everyone to use—no matter their age or ability—all year round. This helps ensure everyone can get where they need to go with ease, safety, and confidence.

Listening to the Community

Residents told us that winter weather, uneven surfaces, and inconsistent maintenance can make it hard to move around safely and comfortably. For many people, accessible

parks and green spaces mattered just as much as sidewalks and streets. They support inclusion, recreation, and help people feel connected to their community.

- **Sidewalk ramps and curbs:** Some neighborhoods are missing curb ramps, or the ramps that exist are too steep or have sudden drop-offs—especially challenging for people using mobility scooters or wheelchairs. In winter, snow piles can block curb cuts entirely, making safe crossings almost impossible.
- **Route placement and visibility:** Ramps and accessible crossings are sometimes located far from intersections, forcing people to travel out of their way or cross where they aren't visible to drivers. Snowbanks can further obstruct sightlines, increasing the risk for those crossing the street.
- **Surface conditions and maintenance:** Uneven sidewalks, cracks, or gaps make travel difficult for people of all abilities. During winter months, snow and ice that aren't cleared promptly create slippery, hazardous conditions and can force people into the street to find a clear path.
- **Parks and pathways:** Not all parks or green spaces have accessible routes, benches, or rest areas. When snow is not removed from trails or pathways, these spaces become unusable for people with mobility challenges, cutting them off from outdoor recreation and community life.
- **Obstructions and barriers:** Items like overgrown shrubs, improperly parked vehicles, e-scooters, or construction debris can block sidewalks and pathways year-round. In winter, snow piles from plows or accumulated snow at curb ramps can turn a short trip into a major detour.

Making Outdoor Spaces More Accessible

City teams across departments—including Community Standards, Parks, Roadways, Fleet and Support, and Recreation and Community Development—are playing an important role in making outdoor spaces more accessible for everyone.

Here are a few examples of progress so far:

- Keeping sidewalks and pathways clear
- Supporting accessible transit stops
- Enhancing the usability of parks and open spaces

We encourage residents to let the City know whenever they encounter barriers, so we can better understand and address these challenges together. By raising awareness,

supporting residents in keeping sidewalks safe, and enforcing bylaws, we aim to create a community where everyone can move freely and confidently throughout our city.

Appendix E – Stories and Experiences from Residents: Accessibility, Information and Communications

“The City of Saskatoon website, and Leisure Services websites are overloaded visually with information and can be challenging to navigate.”

“Website can be difficult to navigate. You have to know exactly what you are looking for (with the wording the City uses) to be able to find it. Sometimes print is too small.”

“The city website is very poorly built from a user experience point of view. It is always difficult to find the information that I am looking for with all the branching links and excessive number of options to click on for each page.”

Getting the right information—whether it's about city services, events, or emergencies—should be easy for everyone. Clear language, accessible formats, and multiple ways to share and receive information help people stay informed and feel included. When communication is easy to understand and available to all, it supports equal access for people of all ages, and people with disabilities. Everyone should be able to get the information they need—whether it's about city services, events, or emergencies.

To make this happen, we need to use:

- **Clear language** that's easy to understand
- **Accessible formats** like large print, audio, or braille
- **Multiple ways to share and receive information**, such as websites, phone lines, and in-person help

When communication is easy and available to all, it helps people of all ages and people with disabilities stay informed and feel included. This supports **equal access for everyone**.

Listening to the Community

Residents told us that it can be hard to find and use information on our website, especially for those using screen readers - software that reads text out loud - or other assistive tools. Some documents are hard to read, and not all staff know how to help people with different communication needs.

“Reliance on communications technologies that utilize computers, iPhones, app and social media are likely to miss many elderly people who have not learned how to use these technologies and do not own the necessary devices.”

Some residents told us it’s hard to get help or find information from the City.

This includes things like knowing who to contact, using online tools, or finding information in formats that work for them.

- **Digital exclusion:** Reliance on technology—like websites, apps, and social media—left out elderly people or those without access to devices or internet skills.
- **Website navigation:** Many people found it hard to locate information on the City’s website, especially those using screen readers or assistive tools.
- **Document accessibility:** Some documents were difficult to read or not available in accessible formats, creating barriers for people with different communication needs.
- **Staff support:** Not all staff knew how to assist residents with various communication or accessibility needs, making it hard to get help and information.

- **Non-emergency contacts:** It was unclear how to contact the Saskatoon Fire Department for non-urgent needs, and some respondents weren't sure if the Fire Department was part of the City.

Improving Accessibility for City Information and Communication

City teams across departments—including Communications and Public Engagement, Information Technology, and City Clerks—are playing an important role in making City information easy to find, easy to understand, and accessible for everyone.

Here are a few examples of progress so far:

- Added tools like font size changers and translation options to the City website.
- Tested webpages with screen readers to ensure they work well for everyone.
- Provided training to staff on how to better support people with disabilities.
- Made City Hall lobby changes to improve wayfinding and assistance.
- Created a clear infographic to show how to contact the Saskatoon Fire Department and added this information to a City-wide “who to contact” guide.
- The Saskatoon Fire Department is working with Communications to make sure all information is clear and easy to find.
- The Saskatoon Fire Department is working with Human Resources to make sure that effective help and accommodations are provided in an inclusive manner.

Improving communication is key to building an inclusive city. By working together, we can ensure all residents stay informed, connected, and supported.

Appendix F – Stories and Experiences from Residents: Accessibility and Transportation

"I don't feel comfortable crossing at some intersections at all. The thing I struggle the most with is trying to hear the traffic. Some of the vehicles are so quiet and there's such a busy intersection. There's so much happening. And it makes me so nervous and gives me so much anxiety every time."

"Another problem is potholes. Potholes when you're trying to cross the street, because I fall on the road sometimes."

"Booking challenges, we apply for Access Transit weekly and usually get turned down ... saying they are full."

"Most bus stops are not located on a paved surface or on a connected path. Most of them are not offering any protection from the elements either."

"I find that the timings on the traffic light crossing does not give older or disabled people enough time to get fully across the road before the red hand stops. I can only really get halfway across and have to rely on the generosity of the drivers to let me cross the rest of the way."

Getting around Saskatoon—whether by bus, car, bike, or mobility aid—should be safe, reliable, and accessible for everyone. Well-designed routes, accessible transit options, and clear information help people travel where they need to go with ease. When transportation systems work for all ages and people with disabilities, it supports independence, connection, and full participation in city life.

Listening to the Community

Residents across Saskatoon shared that accessibility remains a challenge in both transportation and transit. Concerns included narrow accessible parking spaces, long

distances from parking to building entrances, and blocked pedestrian paths—especially in winter. People also noted the limited availability of accessible taxis and ride-share options, and shared frustrations with the process of obtaining accessible parking permits.

In transit, residents expressed the need for more Access Transit vehicles and drivers, easier booking options, and better infrastructure at bus stops. They also asked for clearer signage, real-time updates, and working audible announcements to support independent travel.

People in Saskatoon also told us that it can be hard to find their way around the city, especially for those with disabilities. Some said that signs are not always easy to read or understand. Others mentioned that sidewalks and paths are sometimes too narrow, bumpy, or blocked by snow, which makes it **hard to get around safely**.

- **Parking:** Accessible parking spaces were often too narrow, and parking spaces were far from building entrances, making it difficult for people with mobility devices to enter buildings.
- **Pedestrian paths:** Sidewalks and paths were sometimes too narrow, bumpy, or blocked by snow, which made it hard and unsafe for people to get around, especially in winter.
- **Accessible taxis and ride-share:** There were not enough accessible taxi or ride-share options available, limiting transportation choices for people with disabilities.
- **Accessible parking permits:** The process of getting an accessible parking permit was described as frustrating and complicated by some respondents.
- **Transit vehicles:** People said there were not enough Access Transit vehicles and drivers to meet demand for accessible transit services.
- **Transit booking:** Booking accessible transit rides was difficult; respondents wanted simpler and easier booking options.
- **Bus stops and infrastructure:** Bus stops lacked adequate infrastructure, such as shelter, seating, and clear information, making waiting and boarding harder for people with disabilities.

- **Signage and information:** Signs were not always easy to read or understand, and there was a need for clearer signage and real-time travel updates to support independent travel.
- **Audible announcements:** Some transit services lacked working audible announcements, which made it harder for people who are blind or have low vision to know when to get off or transfer.

Improving Accessibility for Transportation

City teams across departments—including Transportation, Development, and Community Standards—are playing an important role in making it safer and easier for everyone in Saskatoon to get around.

Here are a few examples of progress so far:

- Created a special guide, called the *Active Transportation Wayfinding Toolbox*, to help design better signs and directions. We have used this guide in our first project along the 23rd Street Neighbourhood Bikeway.
- Updated sidewalk and pathway rules to ensure they are wide enough for all users.
- Built 5.5 kilometres of new sidewalks and added over 1,900 curb ramps since 2008.
- Installed 139 Accessible Pedestrian Signals at intersections.
- Made Accessible Pedestrian Signals standard for all new traffic lights.
- Formed the *Active Transportation Advisory Group*, which includes people with disabilities, to guide future planning.

By working together, we can create a transportation network that supports confidence, independence, and ease of movement for everyone.

Appendix G – Stories and Experiences from Residents: Service Animals

“Limited knowledge for instructors and facilities on low vision and service dog laws and rights.”

“I have been a Service Dog (SD) handler for [many years] and regularly encounter discrimination, often on a weekly basis. This includes being denied entry to stores, refused transportation by taxis, losing job opportunities, and facing challenges due to untrained or fraudulent service animals being misrepresented as legitimate SDs.”

Service animals play a vital role in helping many people live independently and safely. It's important that public spaces, services, and staff recognize and support the rights of people who rely on them. When service animals are welcomed and understood, it helps create a more inclusive and respectful city.

Listening to the Community

People have shared that it's important to feel supported when using a service animal at work or when visiting City spaces. They want to know that staff understand how to help and that policies are clear and respectful.

- **Staff understanding:** Some people worried that staff didn't always know how to help or support them when they had a service animal.
- **Policy clarity:** Respondents wanted clearer, more respectful policies about service animals in public spaces and workplaces.
- **Feeling welcome:** People shared that it was important to feel welcomed and supported when using a service animal, so they could participate fully in City spaces.

Welcoming Service Animals Across Our City

City teams across departments—including Human Resources, Communications and Public Engagement, and Recreation and Community Development—are playing an important role in making sure people who use service animals.

Here are a few examples of progress so far:

- The City follows laws that protect the rights of people who use service animals.
- The City supports employees with service animals through personalized workplace plans.
- The City has information in job postings about how to request accommodation for service animal users.
- The City provides staff training on how to support people who use service animals.

By working together, we can create a City that respects and includes people and their service animals.

Appendix H – Stories and Experiences from Residents: Accessibility, Services, Support and Products

“There is a lack of leisure programs for people with disabilities. I would like to see more all levels, inclusive motion, dance and exercise classes. Chair yoga is a good start.”

“I am unable to sign up for certain services, such as automated payments for utilities, because I am required to print off a signed form, scan it, and then submit it. Other departments with the city can use digitally signed forms.”

“There is an incredibly long wait each time I’ve needed to go to City Hall for renewal of the disability parking. It would be nice if this could be done online or if it could be done much faster in person.”

Accessing City services—like recreation programs, permits, or customer support—should be simple, respectful, and barrier-free. When services are designed with accessibility in mind, they work better for people of all ages, and people with disabilities. Inclusive service delivery helps ensure every resident can fully participate in community life and get the support they need.

Listening to the Community

Residents have told us that it can be hard to access City programs and services because of complicated sign-up processes, limited ways to communicate, and websites that aren’t always easy to use. Some people said they had trouble registering for programs, using online payment systems, or finding clear information about services like waste collection, permits, and leisure activities.

Others shared that staff sometimes don’t have enough knowledge about accessibility to be effectively supportive. When it comes to how the City buys goods and services, many people said the process feels unclear and hard to take part in. Only a few people

said they had been able to use the City's procurement system, and many didn't know how to get involved at all.

- **Complicated sign-up processes:** Many people found it difficult to register for programs and services due to confusing steps or poor accessibility.
- **Limited communication options:** Residents said it was hard to reach City services because there weren't enough ways to ask questions or get help directly.
- **Website usability:** Some people reported that City websites were hard to navigate or not accessible to everyone, making it tough to find information or complete tasks online.
- **Staff knowledge gaps:** Respondents shared that staff sometimes lacked training or awareness about accessibility needs.
- **Barriers to program access:** People had trouble signing up for leisure programs or activities, especially when information was unclear or systems were hard to use.
- **Lack of inclusive leisure options:** Some residents noted there were not enough all-levels or accessible recreation classes, limiting participation for people with disabilities.
- **Unclear procurement processes:** Many residents found it confusing or difficult to understand how to get involved when the City buys goods and services.

Making City Accessibility, Services, Support, And Products More Accessible

City teams—including Procurement—are playing an important role in making civic goods and services more accessible. This helps ensure the City's investments support inclusive and barrier-free service delivery.

Here are a few examples of progress so far:

- Proposed adding a new Accessibility Principle to the City's Purchasing Policy.

- Began planning updates to the Purchasing Policy, with a goal of bringing it to City Council in 2026.
- Prepared staff training to help include accessibility in purchasing decisions.
- Promoted accessibility as a key part of how goods and services are selected.

By making accessibility part of every step in the purchasing process, we're building a more inclusive City for everyone.

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Appendix I – Stories and Experiences from Residents: Employment with the City of Saskatoon

“The jobs with the city that I qualify for all require that I drive. But I cannot drive due to my disability. But I still manage to get around in ways that work for me. Why would the city limit or exclude talent simply for driving or not for roles that have nothing to do with driving nor include the use of city vehicles.”

“It seems when I am seen in a wheelchair I am not taken seriously.”

“Very difficult to apply and there are no supports to do so most of the positions require much more ability to use technology or actual physical abilities or visual or hearing requirements.”

Finding and applying for jobs with the City of Saskatoon should be easy, respectful, and open to everyone. When employment processes are accessible, they give all applicants—no matter their age or ability—a fair chance to succeed. Inclusive hiring helps build a stronger, more welcoming workplace that reflects and serves our whole community.

Listening to the Community

People want it to be easier to find and apply for jobs with the City of Saskatoon, especially for those who need accommodation or use service animals. We’ve also heard that job seekers want clear information and appropriate accessibility support throughout the hiring process.

- **Application process:** People found it hard to find and apply for jobs, especially if they needed accommodations or used service animals.

- **Unclear information:** Job seekers said information about openings and support for their needs was often unclear or incomplete.
- **Accommodation support:** Respondents wanted easier ways to ask for and receive accommodations during hiring and employment.
- **Attitudes and bias:** Some reported feeling unwelcome or judged due to attitudes and assumptions about disability, especially for disabilities that aren't visible.
- **Communication barriers:** The hiring process lacked clear guidance or support for those needing extra help or information.

Making Finding and Applying for Work with the City of Saskatoon More Accessible

City teams—including Human Resources—are playing an important role in making it easier and more accessible to find and apply for jobs with the City of Saskatoon. The goal is to ensure all applicants feel supported, informed, and included every step of the way.

Here are a few examples of progress so far:

- Improved the City's website by adding larger text options and a language dropdown.
- Added messages to all job postings encouraging applicants to ask for accommodations if needed.
- Partnered with organizations like SaskAbilities to support job seekers through coaching and placements.
- Hired and supported employees who use service animals in the workplace.

By making the hiring process more accessible, we're helping to build a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects our community.

Appendix J – Stories and Experiences from Residents: Attitudes and Biases within the City

“Sometimes there is an extremely limited sense of patience when speaking to an employee with the City. Because of the fact that I sometimes stutter and explain what I’m asking an employee for in a round-about way, often without being able to make eye contact, I am met with a short attitude of frustration and/or causing me to feel anxious that I’m not speaking fast enough, or am becoming an inconvenience to the worker”

“Disabled people are not generally asking for any kind of treatment that is different than how any non-disabled person wants or expects. We just want the same level of respect afforded to anyone else.”

“Many people treat people with disabilities as stupid or lesser than, like the disability is their fault. Most staff are lovely, but when you get the people who act like this, it is very discouraging to try and get support or contact city workers again.”

Treating everyone with respect and understanding is essential to creating positive and welcoming experiences for all residents when they interact with the City of Saskatoon. Recognizing and addressing biases—whether big or small—helps ensure every resident feels valued, heard, and included. By fostering a culture of fairness and empathy, the City can build stronger connections with the community and make services more accessible and welcoming for everyone.

Listening to the Community

People have told us that attitudes and assumptions about disability can make it harder to feel included or supported—especially when disabilities are not visible. Some individuals have also said that applying for jobs or asking for accommodations can feel uncomfortable or unclear.

- **Attitudes and assumptions:** Some staff treated people with disabilities as less capable or at fault for their disability, making interactions discouraging.

- **Feeling unwelcome:** A few employees' words or behaviors made people feel like they didn't belong or shouldn't ask for help.
- **Lack of understanding:** Some staff did not recognize or respect needs related to non-visible disabilities, leading to people not being believed or taken seriously.
- **Barriers to support:** Negative attitudes from some staff made it harder to seek information, ask for accommodations, or contact the City again.

Making the City of Saskatoon More Supportive and Inclusive

City teams—including Human Resources and Communications and Public Engagement—are playing an important role in building a workplace and community where everyone feels respected, valued, and included.

Here are a few examples of progress so far:

- The City developed the Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (REDI) department to lead inclusive workplace and service initiatives.
- The City updated job postings to be easier to read and more welcoming, with clear accommodation messages.
- Through the “Better Together” project, the City has launched training and awareness programs that focus on mental health, inclusion, and understanding both visible and invisible disabilities.
- City staff have received American Sign Language training, disability awareness sessions, and events highlighting neurodiversity and accessibility.
- The City has started in-person training for frontline staff and developed standard scripts and guidance to support customer service.
- The City is also coordinating training on service animals with Service Saskatchewan and facility teams to ensure appropriate accommodations.

By continuing this work, The City is helping to create a more inclusive and welcoming place to live—for both staff and the community.

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