



# NORTHEASTERN BC COLLABORATIVE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

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## PREPARED FOR:

Peace River Regional District  
Northern Rockies Regional Municipality  
City of Dawson Creek  
City of Fort St. John  
District of Chetwynd  
District of Hudson's Hope  
District of Taylor  
District of Tumbler Ridge  
Village of Pouce Coupe

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## **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The communities of Northeastern BC are situated on the traditional territories of the Dane-zaa, Dene, Cree, Dunne Tsaa, Tsáá? ǂhé Ne Dane, Tse'khene, Dene Tha', Kaska peoples, Dunne-za, and the Métis Nation BC Region 7.

The Northeastern BC Collaborative Accessibility Committee recognizes the many Indigenous communities who have ongoing connections to the land base on which we are situated, as well as the many more whose communities have meeting grounds, gathering places and traveling routes across the region.

We recognize and value the significant contributions of Indigenous Peoples who have lived and worked on this land since time immemorial.

# ABOUT THIS PLAN

This Accessibility Plan was created by municipalities across Northeastern BC to support collaborative and efficient efforts to improve accessibility. Working together provides a unique opportunity to share resources, knowledge, and build collective skills. It also helps community members to have reliable access across the region.

Accessibility for people with disabilities is a shared responsibility. There are many layers to accessibility, such as physical accessibility, accessible information and technology, social and cultural inclusion, safe and inclusive environments, and more. Ensuring that communities are accessible requires knowledge building as well as the application of that knowledge to many different aspects of our society.

The Accessible BC Act (2021) is provincial legislation that sets out a path for British Columbia to become accessible. The Act recognizes the shared responsibility by creating requirements not just for provincial services but for public and civic services within the province as well. More than 750 types of organizations have been prescribed to work towards accessibility by creating accessibility plans, establishing accessibility committees, and receiving feedback on how accessible their organizations are. Prescribed organizations include educational services, local governments, municipal police and emergency services, libraries, health authorities and more. This plan is part of meeting these new requirements.

**Did you know that 1 in 5 Canadians  
over the age of 15 have a disability?**

*– National Disability Survey, 2017*

# WHO IS INVOLVED?

The following communities are part of the Northeastern BC Accessibility Collaborative:

- Peace River Regional District
- Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
- City of Dawson Creek
- City of Fort St. John
- District of Chetwynd
- District of Hudson's Hope
- District of Taylor
- District of Tumbler Ridge
- Village of Pouce Coupe

## **WHY WORK TOGETHER**

Taking a collaborative approach to accessibility amongst local governments in Northeastern BC is a promising opportunity to increase integration amongst communities and improve outcomes for people with disabilities across the region.

The geography of Northeastern BC makes a collaborative approach critical for meeting the aims of improving accessibility for all residents. The mix of rural and urban as well as high and low population density areas in the region means that services (such as medical, post-secondary education, some types of employment, public service offices, etc.) are concentrated in regional hubs, while many people live outside of these hubs in rural or remote settings. Taking a regional approach can support all residents to fully participate and access opportunities and services within their own community and across the region.

**This regional collaboration is an opportunity for an equitable approach to accessibility in a region that is diverse, geographically vast, spatially distributed, and where access to services for most residents of the area is outside of their community – making accessible servicing critical.**



## **OUR VISION**

We envision a Northeastern British Columbia that offers accessibility for all people with disabilities living, working, and exploring Northeastern BC.

## **HOW WE PLAN TO WORK TOGETHER**

Working together across the region in this way is a new tactic. Local governments of Northeastern BC believe that accessibility is more important than geographic boundaries and individual goals. That is why we have chosen to come together in this way.

Together, we have created a shared vision, priorities for action, and an initial set of goals. We have also established a shared Accessibility Committee to support this work.



# NORTHEASTERN BC COLLABORATIVE ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

The Northeastern British Columbia Collaborative Accessibility Committee (the Committee) is tasked with providing a consistent approach to accessibility for people with disabilities living, working, and exploring Northeastern BC.

The Committee was created to assist partnering organizations in implementing requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. **By participating in the Committee, member local governments will be in compliance with the Act.** A regional approach was selected to foster collaboration and cooperation, sharing, and pooling of resources, and avoiding duplication of work.

## **The purpose of the Committee is to:**

- Provide a forum for discussion of issues affecting people with all types of disabilities in the region;
- Inform local governments on accessibility issues and solutions in the region and make recommendations for improving accessibility in communities;
- Identify accessibility barriers in the region and solutions to address them;
- Review and provide input on community plans, actions, designs, and so forth, with an accessibility lens; and
- Organize and/or participate in relevant community events or awareness activities wherever possible.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Committee is comprised of staff representatives from nine member communities as well as people living in the region who have disabilities and/or work with organizations that serve people with disabilities.

- **Nine local government staff representatives** – Staff members are a conduit for communication between the Committee and local governments. They bring experience and expertise in local government practices and services and can offer insight into how to achieve the goals of the Committee.
- **Nine to twelve community members** – These members represent a wide geography and diversity of persons with disabilities in the region. Community members are able to share invaluable lived experience and perspectives on barriers to assist local governments in setting priorities, reviewing plans and policies with an accessibility lens, and identifying best practices to follow.
- **Organizations and departments within the local governments** – These groups will be invited to meetings as needed, so the Committee can directly engage with groups that are going to be potentially involved in rolling out recommendations.



# SHARED PRIORITIES AND GOALS

Local governments in Northeastern BC are working together to achieve a shared goal: embedding accessibility in our local government practices.

## VISION

We envision a Northeastern British Columbia that offers accessibility for all people with disabilities living, working, and exploring Northeastern BC.

By working collaboratively, we can strive for consistency. We want residents to be able to access the services they need, wherever they are in the region.

We are committed to the ongoing process of embedding accessibility in our work. We intend to learn and grow together to improve accessibility in all areas that we have influence. The process of becoming accessible is long-term and we see changes as having a rippling effect.

As our Committee learns and grows, it will support local governments in understanding and responding to barriers, which in turn will impact external organizations that interact with the local governments.

## OUR APPROACH

The Committee and Local Government Collaborative group plan to focus on areas of shared interest and influence. This approach reflects the Committee and the local governments' ability to effect change by focusing on internal practices and external relationships.

As areas to focus action, they are simple but have a scaling impact over time. Work can begin now and expand as new projects, knowledge, and priorities emerge.

Five key approaches have been identified:

1. Education and skill-building
2. Cohesive improvements to infrastructure and service delivery
3. Sharing resources
4. Accountability and enforcement
5. Building relationships with other groups and stakeholders

## **EDUCATION AND SKILL BUILDING**

Skill building and education opportunities for staff, the public, and the Committee are important. With more education and awareness around accessibility issues, community and local government leadership support can be improved for initiatives.

The goal is to increase knowledge and skills on non-physical barriers to accessibility, specifically how to design programs, policies, and places to remove all types of barriers.

## **COHESIVE IMPROVEMENTS TO INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

This approach is focused on working together to improve the quality and distribution of accessible infrastructure as well as inclusive programming and service delivery. It is important to create a regional approach that sets cohesive standards for the participating communities.

## **SHARING RESOURCES**

Sharing real examples of accessibility initiatives can help provide insight and resources as well as improve future accessibility initiatives. Creating a culture and tools for sharing will help with ongoing learning and standardization of practices.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND ENFORCEMENT**

Regular implementation planning will take suggested actions into reality. This will require council support, perhaps budget, updates to policies, procedures or bylaws, and enforcement. While each community will act independently to implement the plan, accountability through reporting (likely to the Collaborative Accessibility Committee) to ensure that action is being taken will be important to demonstrate effectiveness to each other, the Committee, and the public.

## **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS**

Building relationships with other groups and stakeholders through regular communication and/or engagement during project and implementation planning will be critical to expanding the impact of projects outside of local government policies and practices.



# 2023 – 2026 ACTION PLAN

Members of the Northeastern BC Collaborative understand that they cannot tackle every issue and barrier to accessibility at once. To ensure it maintains momentum through achievable goals, five priorities have been identified for the 2023 - 2026 Action Plan:

1. Accessibility committee formulation and goal setting
2. Staff and committee training opportunities
3. Resource sharing across communities
4. Accessibility awareness in community
5. Region-specific standards related to accessibility

To preserve some key actions that member communities want to take but may not be able to undertake in this plan, long-term actions for next steps have also been identified. These are intended to show how learning and resource creation undertaken in the 2023 - 2026 action plan can be further embedded in local government work in the following years. We expect that learning and working together as a collaborative Committee will both expand on these and identify additional actions.

## ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE FORMULATION AND GOAL SETTING

### 2023 – FORMING AND PREPARATION

1. Hold monthly meetings to formulate group, clarify role, and action plan.
  - Approach: Building relationships with other groups and stakeholders
2. Collaboratively review and refine Terms of Reference.
  - Approach: Accountability and enforcement
3. Collaborative review and refine Action Plan.
  - Approach: Accountability and enforcement

4. Establish feedback mechanism.
  - Approach: Accountability and enforcement

## **2024 – 2025**

5. Host conversations with potential partners and organizations.
  - Approach: Building relationships with other groups and stakeholders
6. Create public engagement tools to help share information about the Accessibility Committee and its projects.
  - Approach: Education and skill building

## **ANNUAL EVALUATION AND PLANNING**

7. Identify any specific Committee projects and prepare a budget submission for member community boards and councils.
  - Approach: Accountability and enforcement
8. Review Accessibility Plan.
  - Approach: Accountability and enforcement

## **STAFF AND COMMITTEE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **2024 – 2025**

1. Offer staff at all local governments training on accessibility.
  - Approach: Education and skill building
2. Identify training opportunities for the Accessibility Committee.
  - Approach: Education and skill building
3. Increase staff capacity for accessing accessible construction workshops (e.g., workshops, resources, checklists, etc.)
  - Approach: Education and skill building

## **SHARING RESOURCES ACROSS COMMUNITIES**

### **2024 – 2025**

1. Develop and share resources. This can be related to areas such as tech support, website content creation, accessible engagements, accessible recreation programs and services, building and streetscape design, examples of successful projects, and any other resources as identified by the Accessibility Committee.
  - Approach: Sharing resource

## **ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS IN COMMUNITY**

### **ONGOING**

1. Publicly document accessibility initiatives and projects.
  - Approach: Education and skill building
2. Document areas of strength in accessibility.
  - Approach: Education and skill building

### **2024 – 2025**

3. Develop and launch public engagement campaign.
  - Approach: Education and skill building

## **REGION-SPECIFIC STANDARDS RELATED TO ACCESSIBILITY**

### **ONGOING**

1. Complete reporting on projects to the Accessibility Committee for discussion. Share projects early and act on feedback.
  - Approach: Cohesive improvements to infrastructure and continuity

## 2024 – 2025

1. Identify common areas of work and consider what can be improved with shared standards. This may include maintaining a website, customer service policies, sidewalk or streetscape design, etc.
  - a. Approach: Cohesive improvements to infrastructure and continuity
2. Research best practices and standards for accessibility.
  - a. Approach: Cohesive improvements to infrastructure and continuity.

## NEXT STEPS: ACTIONS FOR 2026 AND BEYOND

1. Promote and encourage use of the feedback mechanism.
  - a. Approach: Education and skill building
2. Individual communities to begin updating Human Resources policies and practices to increase opportunities for people with disabilities.
  - a. Approach: Cohesive improvements to infrastructure and continuity
3. Consider best practices for accessibility in development and infrastructure projects as part of evaluation and approvals.
  - a. Approach: Cohesive improvements to infrastructure and continuity
4. Update programming and service delivery policies and practices to ensure accessibility is a key consideration.
  - a. Approach: Cohesive improvements to infrastructure and continuity
5. Approve formal Council commitments to accessibility. This can include approval of Accessibility Committee Budgets, endorsement and approval of bylaws and policies that align with accessibility recommendations and best practices.
  - a. Approach: Accountability and enforcement



## INDIVIDUAL PLANS

### PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

#### ABOUT US

The Peace River Regional District (PRRD), established in 1967, is geographically the largest regional district in BC, encompassing approximately twelve million hectares (119,337 square kilometers) within the district boundaries. The PRRD serves seven (7) municipalities and four (4) electoral areas that represent forty (40) unincorporated rural communities. There are eight (8) First Nation communities, Blueberry River First Nations, Doig River First Nation, Halfway River First Nation, Kwadacha Nation, McLeod Lake Indian Band, Saulteau First Nations, Tsay Keh Dene Band, West Moberly First Nations within the district boundaries.

Services provided by the PRRD include:

- Noxious weed control
- Community recreation
- Fire protection
- Emergency services
- Solid waste management
- Rural water services
- Sewage collection and disposal
- Regional and community parks
- Building inspection and zoning

### DID YOU KNOW?

About 40% of the province's Agricultural Land Reserve is situated within the Regional District. The Regional District is similar in area size to the American State of Pennsylvania or New Zealand's North Island.

## RECENT ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The PRRD provides a range of services to their residents. To date, the Regional District's approach to accessibility has been focused on removing physical barriers through upgrades at their facilities. Communication and technological barriers individuals may encounter when interacting with the Regional District are also being addressed through improvements to their website, and the availability of staff to answer questions and resolve concerns over the phone.

PROJECT OR PLAN	SUMMARY	TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	YEAR
<b>Facility upgrades</b>	Accessibility upgrades underway at several PRRD owned or operated facilities.	Physical	PRRD	Ongoing
<b>Website audit</b>	Undergoing external audit of website for accessibility challenges.	Technological, Communication	PRRD	2023
<b>Seniors aging-in-place support services</b>	The PRRD is helping seniors in Electoral Area D and parts of Area E to age-in-place by providing essential support services.	Physical, Communication	PRRD	N/A

<b>Regional Parks and Trails Masterplan</b>	Identified accessibility issues in the regional parks.	Physical	PRRD	2014
<b>Blackfoot and Montney Centennial Regional Park Plans</b>	Identified accessibility issues in Blackfoot and Montney Regional Parks and provided recommendations for improvement.	Physical	PRRD	2023
<b>Chetwynd Library Construction</b>	A new barrier free library facility is being constructed in Chetwynd.	Physical	PRRD	2023

**ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 - 2026**

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>North Peace Leisure Facility Replacement Project</b>	Planning for a new aquatics facility/recreation facility in the North Peace.	TBD	PRRD	2024

# NORTHERN ROCKIES REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

## ABOUT US

The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality (NRRM) was incorporated in 2009. NRRM is the first regional municipality in BC, combining the former Northern Rockies Regional District and Town of Fort Nelson. Communities within the NRRM include the administrative centre of Fort Nelson and outlying communities such as Tetsa River, Toad River, Muncho Lake, Liard River, Fireside, and Coal River. The communities of Fort Nelson First Nation and Prophet River First Nation are also located in the region.

Services provided by the Regional Municipality include:

- Solid waste management
- Water and sewer utility
- Roads and grounds
- Cemetery
- Fire protection
- Recreation
- Planning and development services
- Airport
- Emergency management

### DID YOU KNOW?

The boundaries of the NRRM encompass about 10% of the province's landmass!

## RECENT ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The NRRM has been working to identify and remove barriers to accessing services. One big success is the Northern Rockies Regional Recreation center. Designed for accessibility, this modern, inviting facility consistently offers programming and technology solutions to promote inclusion and equitable access to recreation services. Assessment and review of other public spaces and municipal buildings, programs and services is ongoing.

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Recreation Centre</b>	Programming and rates improvement to be more affordable and accessible.	Systemic	NRRM	2021
<b>Facility Upgrades</b>	Municipal owned building upgrades – aquatic centre, hall space, playground, arena seating, accessible parking, elevators and ramps.	Physical	NRRM	2015 +
<b>Zoning Bylaw</b>	Updated Zoning Bylaw to include CSA Accessible Parking Standards.	Physical	NRRM	2023
<b>National Accessibility Week</b>	Promoted 'National Accessibility Week.'	Attitudinal	NRRM	2023
<b>Accessibility and Inclusion Committee</b>	The Northern Rockies Regional Municipality, Fort Nelson Public Library and School District No. 81 recruited community members with lived and learned accessibility experiences to this Committee.	All	NRRM, Fort Nelson Public Library and School District No. 81	2023
<b>NRRM Parks and Trails Active Mobility Planning</b>	Audited Andy Bailey Regional Campground and Art Fraser Park. Improvements came from the audit.	Physical	NRRM	2023
<b>Rick Hanson Foundation</b>	Building inspector is currently training with Rick Hanson Foundation.	Systemic	NRRM	2023

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Website updated</b>	NRRM website updated to be more accessible.	Technological, Information	NRRM	2021 +
<b>Inclusion Worker Hired</b>	Job created for supporting participation in recreation programming for people with disabilities; networking with community organizations; understanding barriers to accessing recreation.	All	NRRM	2023
<b>Installation of Communication board at Art Fraser Park</b>	Display of symbols/pictures to assist in non-verbal communication aiding those with speech or language barriers.	Information, Physical, Attitudinal	NRRM (Input Collaboration with School District 81)	2023
<b>Landscaping and accessibility improvements at local gathering spot</b>	New pathways and improved entry/exit enable people with mobility challenges to participate in firepit/picnic area activities	Physical	NRRM	2023
<b>SuperHost Training</b>	Training for Front Counter staff to support customers with accessibility challenges including sight, hearing, mobility and those whose first language may not be English	Technological, Information, Attitudinal	NRRM	2021
<b>Installation of Sound Baffling Panels</b>	Improvements in Municipal Office Front Counter for improved acoustics to aid hearing impaired.	Physical	NRRM	2020

## ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 – 2026

PROJECT OR PLAN	SUMMARY	TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	YEAR
<b>Art Fraser Accessibility &amp; Improvement Project</b>	Detailed design for creation and improvement of accessible community park space.	All	NRRM	2024-2026
<b>Andy Bailey Accessibility &amp; Improvement Project</b>	The project will undertake improvements identified through public engagement including upgrades to washroom facilities, picnic areas and walkways; construction of a change room and screened-in shelter; installation of a dock and beach mat; establishment of accessible parking and further developments to camping areas.	All	NRRM	2023-2025
<b>Townhall upgrades</b>	Major renovations including levelling of workspaces, installation of elevator, chair lift.	Physical	NRRM	2024-2026
<b>Accessibility Principles Training</b>	Northern Rockies AIC initiating review of community events/programs to understand and strategize highest impact changes for inclusivity	All	NRRM	2023

# CITY OF DAWSON CREEK

## ABOUT US

The City of Dawson Creek was incorporated in 1958. The City is the second largest member municipality of the PRRD. The City borders Electoral Area D. The City of Dawson Creek is approximately 24.8 square kilometers in size, and had a population of 12,323 in 2021. The City is seen as the service centre for the South Peace Region and is referred to as the “Capital of the Peace”. The Village of Pouce Coupe borders the southeastern boundary of the City of Dawson Creek and, through mutual agreements, benefits from the provision of services, such as water, from Dawson Creek.

Some of the services provided by the City include:

- Cemeteries
- Development services
- Fire protection
- Garbage and recycling
- RCMP
- Recreation programs
- Road maintenance and operation
- Snow removal
- Water and sewer
- Yard waste

### DID YOU KNOW?

**On February 13, 1943, an explosion destroyed an entire block in the heart of Dawson Creek. Dawson Creek had no water supply system and the only water available was the surface run-off in the road ditches.**

## RECENT ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The City of Dawson Creek recognizes the importance of partnerships in advancing accessibility. The City has identified several internal projects to support employees who have disabilities, as well as help the public access City services. Some of these projects aim to increase the accessibility of City-owned buildings and increase human resources available to assist employees. They would also like to increase staff resources and their capacity to identify and address barriers.

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Accessible Playground</b>	Building the first accessible playground in Dawson Creek	Physical	City of Dawson Creek	2023
<b>Seniors aging-in-place supports</b>	The PRRD is helping seniors in Electoral Area D and parts of Area E to age-in-place with attentive snow clearing.	Physical	PRRD	Ongoing
<b>Culture, Parks and Recreation Master Plan</b>	Identifies barriers and actions for parks, recreation and culture services and facilities in Dawson Creek.	Physical	City of Dawson Creek	2023
<b>Literacy Programs</b>	International students provided with literacy programs for those with English as a second language.	Communications	Northern Lights College	Ongoing
<b>Road/curb upgrades</b>	Curb upgrades on roads in the City.	Physical	City of Dawson Creek	Ongoing
<b>New website</b>	Built a new City website that focuses on accessibility, using alt text and plain language.	Communications	City of Dawson Creek	2023

## ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 – 2026

PROJECT OR PLAN	SUMMARY	TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	YEAR
<b>Art Gallery Upgrades</b>	The City of Dawson Creek received funding from NDIT for upgrades to access the Art Gallery.	Physical	City of Dawson Creek NDIT	2024
<b>Road/curb upgrades</b>	Curb upgrades on roads in the City to improve safety and accessibility.	Physical	City of Dawson Creek	Ongoing
<b>Municipal owned building upgrades</b>	Upgrades to municipal owned buildings to enhance accessibility are planned.	Physical	City of Dawson Creek	2024 and ongoing
<b>Accessible Documents and Communication</b>	Training staff to use alt text and plain language in emails and documents.	Communi-cations	City of Dawson Creek	Ongoing
<b>Accessible Sport Courts</b>	Will connect the Dawson Creek Trail to the new sports courts in Kin Park to ensure accessibility.	Physical	City of Dawson Creek	2024

# CITY OF FORT ST. JOHN

## ABOUT US

Incorporated in 1947, the City of Fort St. John is the largest city in the Peace River Regional District and Northeast BC. The City borders Electoral Area B, C, D and E. It is also the largest city in BC situated along the Alaska Highway. The City is a prominent service centre for the region, with medical, recreational, financial, educational and other services located within the city.

The City provides a range of services including:

- Recreation
- Parks and grounds
- Water and sewer
- Garbage and recycling collection
- Cemetery
- Development services
- Fire protection
- Road maintenance
- Snow removal
- RCMP

### DID YOU KNOW?

**There are only three indoor speedskating ovals in Canada, one is in Calgary, the other in Quebec City, and the third is right here in Fort St. John! It is also the only municipally operated indoor speedskating oval.**

## RECENT ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The City of Fort St. John has embarked on several accessibility initiatives in recent years. Accessibility reviews of recreation facilities were completed in 2020 in preparation for the BC Winter Games. Recreation center programming staff are educated in delivering accessibility programming. Both the Parks and Recreation Plan and Official Community Plans mention accessibility. There is a lack of a formal, integrated approach to accessibility across City departments, though. A major goal for Fort St. John is to move from responsive accessibility projects to a proactive, planned approach.

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Accessible mobility device loan</b>	Walkers and skate aids are available for public use at the Pomeroy Sport Centre. Water wheelchairs at the North Peace Leisure Pool.	Physical	City of Fort St. John	N/A
<b>Informal audit for BC Winter Games</b>	Washroom signs and accessibility features in restrooms were identified and improved.	Physical	City of Fort St. John	2020
<b>FSJ Strategic Plan</b>	Affordable and accessible wellness and recreation opportunities were identified as a priority.	Systemic	City of Fort St. John	2023
<b>Parks and Recreation Master Plan</b>	Accessibility was a theme in the goals and actions identified in the plan.	Physical	City of Fort St. John	2017
<b>Fort St. John Official Community Plan</b>	Physical accessibility considerations and the want of an accessibility plan to be developed were in the plan.	Physical	City of Fort St. John	2017
<b>Assisted Association for Community Living Events</b>	Provides volunteer support, activities, and recreation equipment to Association for Community Living during events.	Physical, Systemic and Sensory	Association for Community Living	Ongoing
<b>Employment for Association for Community Living</b>	Provides employment opportunities for those from Association for Community Living.	Attitudinal, Systemic	City of Fort St. John Association for Community Living	Ongoing

## ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 – 2026

PROJECT OR PLAN	SUMMARY	TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	YEAR
<b>Community Services Fees and Service Audit</b>	Evaluating current services and needs in the community including review of a Leisure Access Program.	Financial Accessibility	City of Fort St. John	2023
<b>Accessible Event Programming</b>	Corporate events to include an accessibility evaluation during planning stages.	Physical and Neurodivergent	City of Fort St. John	2023
<b>Customer Service Staff Training</b>	All customer service staff in Community Services Division to undergo accessible customer service training, “SuperHost – Service for All.”	All	City of Fort St. John	2023
<b>North Peace Arena Accessibility</b>	Automatic door openers installed on doors to arena bleachers	Physical	City of Fort St. John	2024
<b>Kids Arena Field House</b>	The building is being retrofitted for accessibility, with a new elevator and bleacher system coming.	Physical	City of Fort St. John	2023 / 2024
<b>Assisted Association for Community Living Events</b>	Provides volunteer support, activities, and recreation equipment to Association for Community Living during events.	Physical, Systemic and Sensory	Association for Community Living	Ongoing
<b>Employment for Association for Community Living</b>	Provides employment opportunities for those from Association for Community Living	Attitudinal, Systemic	City of Fort St. John Association for Community Living	Ongoing

# DISTRICT OF CHETWYND

## ABOUT US

The District of Chetwynd, incorporated in 1962, is situated at the junction of Highway 97 and 29. The District is a member of the Peace River Regional District and the third largest municipality. The District is located within Electoral Area E. The District is seen a primary service provider for the West Peace region and works closely with its neighbouring communities on initiatives in the area.

Services provided by the District of Chetwynd include:

- Development services
- Fire protection
- Airport services
- Snow removal
- Solid waste management
- Water and sewer
- Parks and recreation
- Victim services
- Housing services for RCMP, Nurses, and Doctors
- Air quality monitoring – Purple air
- Public works services
- Visitor services
- Medical office services
- RCMP

### DID YOU KNOW?

Chetwynd is home to a full-service accessible recreation centre, new fully accessible library, and is home to the annual Chetwynd International Chainsaw Carving Championship!

## RECENT ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The District of Chetwynd has been pursuing increased accessibility in the community for many years. Through a combination of investments in infrastructure and equipment, and working with community partners, the District has been taking steps towards increasing access to the community for all residents. Actions include purchasing mobility equipment like portable ramps that are free on request for public use, capital investments in accessible pathways, and running an accessible bus service for seniors.

Ongoing work and consultation with community partners is helping the District to identify opportunities to improve accessibility for all.

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Downtown Revitalization Plan</b>	Plan and community engagement process identified physical accessibility barriers in the downtown area.	Physical	District of Chetwynd	2021
<b>Active Transportation Plan</b>	Identified that active transportation is important for those community members that have accessibility challenges, and action items to improve accessibility (trails, sidewalks, wayfinding and signs) in Chetwynd.	Physical, information	District of Chetwynd	2021
<b>Ramp Free Equipment Program</b>	Ramp is available to borrow at the visitor centre.	Physical	District of Chetwynd	2022
<b>Facility Upgrades</b>	Ramp access improvements to the recreation centre are planned.	Physical	District of Chetwynd	2023
<b>Relationships with Community Members</b>	Feedback is provided by two community members with accessibility challenges, and regular service provider meetings happen with community businesses.	Physical	District of Chetwynd	2023

## ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 – 2026

PROJECT OR PLAN	SUMMARY	TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	YEAR
<b>Sidewalks</b>	Wabi Crescent and Little Prairie Haven to Nicholson Road Chevron sidewalks are being constructed	Access	District of Chetwynd	2023
<b>Park Additions</b>	Future planning for addition to park spaces to enhance accessibility is anticipated.	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Chainsaw Competition Grounds and Display</b>	Access to be improved beside skate park and greenspace for carving event.	Access	District of Chetwynd	2023
<b>Facility Upgrades</b>	Library access, Visitor Centre access to be enhanced.	Physical	District of Chetwynd	2023
<b>Community Garden</b>	Accessibility to the greenhouse and plots to be enhanced.	Physical	District of Chetwynd	2023
<b>Walking trail system</b>	Walking trail system is under development: 2023 - Along south boulevard in front of new restaurants (EDO, Subway, & Domino's). 2024 - South Access boulevard Chevron to Lights. 2025 - Lights to South Access in front of Stagecoach. 2026 - South Access Bridge to Days Inn	Physical	District of Chetwynd	2023-2026
<b>Downtown beautification</b>	Access and let downs improved, lighting added along streets.	Physical	District of Chetwynd	2022-2023
<b>Cemetery</b>	Access and walkways improved.	Physical	District of Chetwynd	2022-2023

# DISTRICT OF HUDSON'S HOPE

## ABOUT US

Hudson's Hope was first established as fur trading post in 1805 and incorporated in 1965. The District of Hudson's Hope is a member of the Peace River Regional District (PRRD), and borders Electoral Areas E and B. The District of Hudson's Hope relies on the PRRD for planning and development services, as well as fire protection services. Hudson's Hope is one of the most solarized communities per capita in Canada and its residents are proud of the community's electrical self-generation, sustainability and fiscal responsibility. The District of Hudson's Hope is also home to one of Northern BC's only outdoor swimming pools.

Services that the District provides include:

- Community and recreation services
- Public works (water, grounds, roads, solid waste, cemetery)

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Hudson's Hope has the most Northerly outdoor swimming pool in BC, which features a zero-entry beach type access which is excellent for users with mobility challenges.**

## RECENT ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The District of Hudson's Hope strives to be an accessible community. Hudson's Hope provides services to the surrounding rural areas within the District. Both local residents and residents of surrounding areas access necessary care and services here. However, they also use Chetwynd and Fort St. John as service hubs. As municipal buildings are updated or built, physical accessibility is being considered as a design priority. The District is also considering sidewalks and pedestrian pathways to improve connectivity between amenities in the community.

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Community Hall Ramp Upgrades</b>	Repairing & upgrading ramp access to Community Hall	Physical	District of Hudson's Hope	2023
<b>District Building Access</b>	All district owned buildings have ramp access.	Physical	District of Hudson's Hope	2023

**ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 – 2026**

The District of Hudson's Hope will work in conjunction with the Collaborative Accessibility Committee to develop an Action Plan and tangible actions for enhancing accessibility in the community over the 2023 - 2026 period.

# DISTRICT OF TAYLOR

## ABOUT US

The District of Taylor was originally incorporated as the Village of Taylor in 1958. Later in 1989, the District of Taylor reincorporated. Taylor is a member municipality of the Peace River Regional District (PRRD). The District of Taylor borders Electoral Area C, D and E. The District covers an area of about 16.92 square kilometers, with a population of 1,317 in 2021. Taylor residents visit the neighbouring City of Fort St. John for many services.

Services provided by the District include:

- Sewer and water
- Cemetery operations
- Snow and ice control
- Street sweeping and road maintenance
- Community and recreation services
- Development services

### DID YOU KNOW?

The District of Taylor has hosted the Annual World Invitational Gold Panning Championships since 1972.

## RECENT ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

From 2009-2019 the District of Taylor had an Advisory to Council Accessibility Committee. This committee completed two key projects – communication and information sharing with the community to increase awareness, and a report on facilities in 2018. The District has been working on the recommended changes in this report. While there is not a formal strategy for accessibility at this time, District staff work to include accessibility as a key consideration in their work. They are consistently looking for ways to improve their ability to identify barriers so they can remove them.

PROJECT OR PLAN	SUMMARY	TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED	LEAD AGENCY	YEAR
Library Updates	Installation of an auto access door.	Physical	District of Taylor	2023

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Community Services Hub Update</b>	Installation of a designated accessible parking space.	Physical	District of Taylor	2023
<b>Playground Updates</b>	Playgrounds around the District are continuing to be upgraded through the installation of “pour in place” rubber and accessible play equipment.	Physical	District of Taylor	2022 (ongoing)
<b>Housing Needs Assessment</b>	Report identified accessible housing needs in Taylor.	Systemic, physical,	District of Taylor	2021
<b>Lone Wolf Golf Club Updates</b>	Replacement of heavy, non-accessible doors to doors with auto access.	Physical	District of Taylor	2020
<b>Visitor Centre Updates</b>	Ramp improvements through the installation of grab bars.	Physical	District of Taylor	2020
<b>Arena Updates</b>	Upgrades to improve parking and access into the facility, ramp safety, and washrooms.	Physical	District of Taylor	2019-2020
<b>Curling Rink Washroom Updates</b>	Improvements to accessible bathroom stalls and height of mirrors, towel	Physical	District of Taylor	2019

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
	dispenser and hand driers.			
<b>District of Taylor Municipal Office</b>	Installation of a drop-down counter.	Physical	District of Taylor	2020

## **ACTION PLAN FOR 2023-2026**

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Senior Driveway Clearing</b>	Program offered annually to seniors and physically disabled residents.	Physical	District of Taylor	2023-2026
<b>Free camping at Peace Island Park for persons with disabilities</b>	Program offered by BC Parks that is recognized by Peace Island Park.	Physical	District of Taylor	2023-2026
<b>Golf Course Participaction Trail Improvements</b>	Paving of the back loop of the trail to make the entire trail accessible.	Physical	District of Taylor	2023
<b>Library Updates</b>	Rearranging interior setup of shelving to improve accessibility.	Physical	District of Taylor	2023
<b>Senior Eye Exams</b>	Program to provide annual eye care to seniors.	Physical	District of Taylor	2024

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Website Updates</b>	Installation of plug-ins to make the website more user friendly for persons with audio/visual disabilities.	Information / Communication, Systemic, Technology	District of Taylor	2024
<b>Livestreaming Council Meetings</b>	Increased access for those unable to attend Council Meetings in person.	Information / Communication, Systemic, Technology	District of Taylor	2024
<b>Playground Updates</b>	Installation of pour in place rubber and accessible play equipment.	Physical	District of Taylor	2024-2025
<b>Curling Complex Updates</b>	Installation of a lift to improve access to the lounge.	Physical	District of Taylor	2025
<b>Golf Course Updates</b>	Renovations to the current ramp.	Physical	District of Taylor	2025

# DISTRICT OF TUMBLER RIDGE

## ABOUT US

The District of Tumbler Ridge was incorporated in 1981 and construction of the townsite and associated infrastructure began the same year. The District is a member municipality of the Peace River Regional District (PRRD), and borders Electoral Areas E and D. The District encompasses an area of 1,558 square kilometers with a population of 2,399 (2021).

Services provided by the District include:

- Garbage and recycling collection
- Water sanitation system
- Recreation
- RCMP
- Fire protection
- Parks and ground
- Road maintenance

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark is one of the only five geoparks in Canada and the only one located in Western North America.**

## RECENT ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

In 2019, the District of Tumbler Ridge completed an Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan which examined many accessibility barriers. This work has resulted in several changes and building upgrades to improve accessibility in the community. Recently, the District also updated their website to be more accessible and is continuing to implement accessibility through its Accessibility Design Guidelines. The Guidelines include equitable access, including physical accessibility.

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Updated Website</b>	The District website was redeveloped with accessibility in mind.	Technology, information	District of Tumbler Ridge	2023
<b>Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan</b>	An age-friendly assessment and action plan was completed for Tumbler Ridge.	Systemic, physical, communication , technology	District of Tumbler Ridge	2019
<b>Visitor Centre TrailRider</b>	Visitor centre provides a TrailRider for mobility device users.	Physical	District of Tumbler Ridge	2021
<b>Downtown Design Guidelines</b>	All development in the downtown area must follow these guidelines.	Physical	District of Tumbler Ridge	2022
<b>Mayor's Senior Needs Taskforce</b>	Taskforce examines housing and support service needs for seniors in the community.	Physical, systemic, technological	District of Tumbler Ridge	2008

**ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 – 2026**

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Community Centre</b>	The Community Centre will be replacing the weight room door to provide accessibility to recreation services.	Physical	District of Tumbler Ridge	2023

# VILLAGE OF POUCE COUPE

## ABOUT US

The Village of Pouce Coupe was incorporated in 1932, with a current population of 762 residents (2021) and municipal boundary size of 325 hectares. The Village is a member municipality of the Peace River Regional District (PRRD). The Village borders Electoral Area D. Neighbouring Dawson Creek is a service hub for the residents of Pouce Coupe. The City of Dawson Creek provides water to the Village of Pouce Coupe.

The Village offers the following services:

- Development services (building permits and inspections)
- Snow removal and road maintenance
- Sewer
- Fire protection
- RCMP detachment
- Garbage and recycling collection

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The name Pouce Coupe comes from the French words “cut thumb.”

## RECENT ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The Village of Pouce Coupe has worked to upgrade municipally owned buildings in the community to improve physical accessibility. Further upgrades to other buildings used by the community, such as the school, require partnerships. The Village of Pouce Coupe is particularly interested in expanding their work on accessibility to address other barrier types over the next few years.

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Accessible Washroom</b>	Addition being added to church to provide an accessible washroom	Physical	Bible Missionary Church	2023-2024
<b>Village Office Door</b>	Upgrades to the Village office door to add an automatic door button.	Physical	Village of Pouce Coupe	2024
<b>Post Office Ramp</b>	Ramp added to access the post office.	Physical	Village of Pouce Coupe	2024-2025

**ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 – 2026**

<b>PROJECT OR PLAN</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>TYPE OF BARRIERS ADDRESSED</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>Village Park</b>	Upgrades to Village Park to be accessibility friendly.	Physical	Village of Pouce Coupe	2025

# EVALUATION METHODS

Evaluation is an important part of applying learning. Each year, the Collaborative Accessibility Committee will evaluate progress and discuss learnings.

- **Regular Reporting** – Each Collaborative Accessibility Committee meeting will include an opportunity for project updates. The facilitator, sub-committees, or local governments may provide brief updates on projects.
- **Annual Evaluation** – Each year a Collaborative Accessibility Committee meeting will be designated as an evaluation meeting. The facilitator will provide a summary of the year’s activities and members may provide updates on projects and key learnings. The Committee may then discuss the projects and learnings and consider how to adjust projects, priorities, actions, or approaches to its work in the coming year.

Guiding questions have been developed to support in overall evaluation. Specific projects or activities may have their own metrics. Specific evaluation tools, such as surveys of committee members, checklists, or reporting templates may need to be created as the Committee works together and evolves its processes. This list of questions is not encompassing of everything the Committee may choose to monitor over time. It is simply a starting point for evaluation and may be refined if the Collaborative Accessibility Committee chooses to do so.

## ARE WE ADDRESSING MULTIPLE BARRIER TYPES?

The Accessible BC Act discusses a variety of barrier types that can prevent access to communities for people with disabilities. The Committee strives to address multiple barrier types in its work. The following questions can be asked during evaluation:

- What projects did we undertake related to each barrier? Some projects may address multiple barriers.
- Were there any barrier types we did not address? Why?
- What can we do next year to address more barrier types?

## TYPES OF BARRIERS

BC's Accessibility Plan identifies the following barriers:

**Attitudinal Barriers** – When people think and act based upon false ideas, like:

- Making decisions about people with disabilities without including them
- Not believing that a person with a disability can contribute to the workforce

**Physical Barriers** – When obstacles make access difficult, like:

- A washroom with an accessible stall but no automatic door opener
- Hosting a meeting in a space with no wheelchair access

**Information or Communication Barriers** – When communication methods do not reach people with disabilities, like:

- Using small print or not providing large-print versions of material
- Videos, events, or meetings that do not have closed captions

**Systemic Barriers** – When an organization's policies or procedures aren't inclusive, like:

- Not providing an American Sign Language interpreter or closed captioning
- Requiring a driver's license for a job when another form of transportation could be used

**Technological Barriers** – When technology can't be accessed by people with disabilities, like:

- Websites, documents, or databases that are not accessible for screen readers
- Website graphs and charts do not have text to explain them

**Sensory Barriers** – When lights, sounds or smells prevent participation in the environment, like:

- Co-workers wearing perfume in the workplace
- Use of fluorescent lighting in the workplace



## **ARE WE APPLYING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE ACCESSIBLE BC ACT?**

The Accessible BC Act identifies a set of guiding principles for improving accessibility. The Committee commits to following these guiding principles. In evaluations, the following questions can be asked, which are related to each of the six guiding principles.

### **ADAPTABILITY**

The Accessibility Committee must adapt its priorities as emerging needs and new information arise. Additionally, accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change.

- Did we learn anything new this year that required adaptation of our plans? What was it and how did we adapt? How can we adapt for next year?

### **COLLABORATION**

This work involves partnerships and collaboration across governments, with people with disabilities, and the Provincial Accessibility Committee. Promoting accessible communities is a shared responsibility and everyone has a role to play.

- Did we work well together as a committee? Were we able to identify and work with other partners?

### **DIVERSITY**

It's important to consider the variety of identities found within an organization, group, or society.

- Does our committee membership reflect our region?

## **INCLUSION**

This principle focuses on the practice of using proactive measures to create an environment where people feel welcomed, respected, and valued. It aims to foster a sense of belonging and engagement to support participation. All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.

- Do committee members feel included in the committee processes? Do they see how their input is being applied in local government practices?

## **SELF-DETERMINATION**

The ability to choose and set goals, self-advocate, make personalized decisions, and reach goals is an important component of this work.

- Have committee members been able to identify and pursue their own projects?

## **UNIVERSAL DESIGN**

Universal design is the process of creating services and environments that are accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, and other characteristics.

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design defines Universal Design as “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.”

- Have we considered best practices and universal design in our learnings, shared resources, and approaches to policies, practices, and projects?

## LEARNING AND INSIGHTS

Learning is critical to practicing accessibility. Each year, the Committee will consider how it has supported ongoing learning. This learning might look like hosting workshops or inviting guest speakers to present to the Committee or local governments. It could be developing and launching public awareness or education projects, or it could be committee members sharing and discussing best practices, policies, or projects they have worked on.

- Did we host guest speakers, complete courses, or participate in other types of learning? How did we share that learning with member communities?
- What learning did each local government undertake?
- Did we help inform the public about accessibility?

## RECEIVING PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Feedback collected from the public and any actions taken will be summarized by the facilitator and shared with the Committee for discussion.



# CONCLUSION

The Northeastern British Columbia Collaborative Accessibility Committee is excited to be embarking on this journey towards accessibility together. The local governments of Northeastern BC have decided to collaborate on this work to improve the public's experience across the region. We do this work in recognition that our communities' boundaries are not the boundaries our citizens live their whole lives in. Together, we can have a much greater impact than if we worked independently.

**Please be on the lookout for opportunities to be involved!**