



Staff Report to Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee

DATE: Wednesday, April 24, 2024

DEPARTMENT: Legislative Services

SUBJECT: Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee Survey #1 Results and Engagement Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report outlines the results of the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee survey that was released on Friday, December 8, 2023, and closed Wednesday, January 31, 2024. The intent of this report is to provide an overview of information collected from the public and analyze the data in order to determine the next steps forward for the Committee.

This engagement summary will also be useful for future consultants.

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting held November 22, 2023, the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee determined the City of Langford would use its "Let's Chat Langford" engagement software platform to host a survey to gather feedback pertaining to accessibility engagement. The survey was three (3) questions in length and asked respondents the following:

1. What types of engagement would you like to see?
2. Please indicate which venue(s) or type of venue(s) are most accessible for in-person engagement. Please note you can include venues within any of the partner municipalities (Langford, Colwood, View Royal, Esquimalt, Highlands, Sooke, Metchosin).
3. Do you have any other suggestions?

This survey was promoted online through social media channels for all participating local governments. The survey was available online through Let's Chat Langford, on paper, as a Word document, and as PDF that could be emailed.

COMMENTARY:

Surveys Completed and Project Page Visits:

Total Respondents (people who took the survey):	163
Visitors to the Survey:	299
Visits to Project Page:	425

Question 1: What types of engagement would you like to see?

Online surveys	129
In person focus groups facilitated by an instructor	112
Written submissions (email, letter)	81
Paper surveys or comment cards	45

Note: Question 1 allowed for respondents to select multiple options.

Question 1 also offered a fillable field for options outside of those provided. The following was received:

- Public meetings where accessibility items are the only ones discussed.
- Newsletter with updates from all involved communities with progress reports. Respondent noted that this would be nice to see every 2 months.
- Community Zoom calls/online focus groups.
- Materials using large fonts and braille.
- Visual aids and graphics use wherever possible.
- More opportunities to discuss directly with Councils. Respondent noted that this could be formal or informal (meet and greet, coffee shop pop-up)
- Advertisements in local newspapers
- Open house style engagement at municipal hall
- Open house style engagement at malls
- Virtual session hosted by a facilitator.
- Mail out

Overall, zoom and online facilitated engagement were most suggested in this category along with informal meet and greet sessions with members of Council.

Question 2: Please indicate which venue(s) or type of venue(s) are most accessible for in-person engagement. Please note you can include venues within any of the partner municipalities (Langford, Colwood, View Royal, Esquimalt, Highlands, Sooke, Metchosin).

General submissions included:

- School Gyms
- City Hall
- Community Centre
- Recreation Centers
- Currently empty storefronts in malls or shopping centers
- Auditoriums
- Libraries
- Churches
- Buildings with a community room
- Government buildings

Respondents noted the following pertaining to a specific municipality:

Municipality:	Suggestions:
Colwood	• Royal Roads University • Emery Hall • Seniors Center
Langford	• Langford in General • Starlight Stadium • Westhills YW/YMCA • Four Points Sheraton • Legion • Belmont Market • Millstream Shopping Center • West Shore Mall
View Royal	• Victoria Scottish Community Centre
Esquimalt	• Esquimalt Recreation Centre • Gorge Pavilion • Legion
Highlands	• Highlands Community Hall.
Sooke	• Whiffin Spit • John Phillips Memorial Park • Ed Macgregor Park • Edward Milne School Parking Lot • Legion
Metchosin	• Metchosin Community Hall • Gym in the Metchosin Arts and Cultural Center

	• Hans Helgesen • St. Mary's Church • Metchosin Golf Course
--	---

Respondents noted that locations should be outfitted with ramps, automatic doors, elevators, adequate handicapped parking, and accessible washrooms. Respondents also noted that while a building may have a ramp, there may still be barriers to enter the building such as a step or ledge.

The ability for the room to host more than one interactive option was also noted as important. For example, in person oral presentation and an accompanying slide presentation, braille information, posters with large font etc.

Ample and free parking was also noted as high importance for respondents when selecting a location. Proximity to transit routes was also highlighted. A need for HandiDart parking was also identified.

Respondents noted the importance of engagement events being held in Sooke due to proximity to other municipalities, and difficulties with transit.

Importance was placed on smaller gatherings. Respondents chose to disclose that due to health challenges, they would feel unsafe in a large gathering. These same respondents noted a preference for either online events, or online options.

Many responses indicated that engagement events should take place in every municipality involved. From those who selected specific locations, Langford, Sooke and Esquimalt were identified.

Question 3: Do you have any other suggestions?

This question was open ended and allowed respondents to type/write their own answer. Due to the nature of this question, there was a variety of responses. To make it easier to follow, the responses have been organized into categories:

Challenges:

- Lack of public engagement (public apathy)
- Don't forget about deaf or blind people when planning events.
- Disabilities and challenges can be very diverse.
- Need for American Sign Language interpreters for events.
- Closed captioning.
- Don't forget families and caregivers.

- Can be difficult to make improvements to accessibility while growing as a community.
- Lack of beach accessibility

Event Specific:

- When planning an event, be aware of bus service end times.
- Host events at multiple times of the day so more people may attend.
- Dark evenings can be a barrier for people to attend events.
- Need for small, intimate events.
- Need for large gathering events.
- Importance of virtual options so more people can participate and use their own devices/adaptive technology.
- Consider traffic impacts when choosing a time for engagement activities.
- Don't forget about service animals at events.
- Advertise events as wheelchair accessible (but only if they are).
- Difference between handicapped parking and accessible parking.

Committee Feedback:

- Sub-committee made up of residents.
- Excitement for the public to join the Committee and a wish that they had been included as members from the beginning.
- Would like to see more progress reports coming from Committee to the Council level.
- Request to see the feedback presented.
- Don't forget to include the Disability Alliance of BC, Inclusion BC, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, BC Center for Ability, Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center, and Canadian National Institute for the Blind when promoting the Committee.

General Accessibility Considerations:

- Request input before making changes to barriers in the community.
- Wish for the process to be quick.
- Desire for road structure to be left out.
- Public availability of the Station Road (Langford) Accessibility Report.
- Ability to speak freely with no judgement.
- Wish to not hire consultants.
- Municipalities should publish a document listing all accessible buildings/businesses and their features (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

OPTIONS:

THAT the Committee:

1. Receive this report for information, and
2. Make this report available on the respective websites, and
3. Forward this report to the Council's of Colwood, Langford, Esquimalt, Sooke, Highlands, Metchosin, and View Royal for information.

SUBMITTED BY: Marie Watmough, Director of Legislative & Protective Services at the City of Langford and the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair.