



# MEASURING UP:

A GUIDE TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES IN BECOMING MORE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE FOR ALL



Measuring Up is a 2010 Legacies Now program which supports communities to become more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. By improving accessibility and becoming more inclusive, communities are ensuring they are welcoming for residents and visitors with disabilities, as well as older people, people pushing baby carriages or carrying luggage, and those with temporary injuries.



2010 Legacies Now is dedicated to strengthening arts, literacy, sport and recreation, healthy living, accessibility and volunteerism in communities throughout British Columbia. As a not-for-profit society, 2010 Legacies Now is creating lasting legacies around the province leading up to, and beyond, the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.



The Vancouver Agreement is an urban development initiative of the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver. Through the Vancouver Agreement, the three levels of government collaborate and coordinate resources on projects and initiatives to make Vancouver a healthy, safe, and economically and socially sustainable place to live, work and visit. The Vancouver Agreement was pleased to fund the first phase of the Measuring Up program.



2010 Legacies Now gratefully acknowledges the Province of British Columbia for its ongoing support of Measuring Up and other programs.

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**A MESSAGE FROM RICH COLEMAN  
MINISTER OF HOUSING AND SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

The Government of British Columbia is committed to improving the lives of British Columbians with disabilities. We are working to achieve this goal through the Provincial Disability Strategy, which aims to provide for a flexible, comprehensive and integrated system of support for all British Columbians with disabilities, to enable them to participate more fully in community life.

The 2010 Legacies Now Measuring Up program plays a key role in our Disability Strategy by helping communities build greater awareness of the achievements of people with disabilities and remove obstacles so they can more fully contribute their skills and talents in their communities.

We are proud to support 2010 Legacies Now and Measuring Up, and welcome the opportunities the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games present in creating a province that is inclusive for everyone.

**RICH COLEMAN**  
Minister of Housing and Social Development

**A MESSAGE FROM BRUCE DEWAR,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
2010 LEGACIES NOW**

Everyone benefits when communities become more accessible and inclusive. Through Measuring Up, 2010 Legacies Now is supporting communities throughout B.C. as they foster opportunities for the active and ongoing engagement, participation and contribution of persons with disabilities.

Measuring Up is a collaborative process. It engages people with a range of disabilities, as well as local government, the business sector and other grass-roots community leaders, to assess and improve local accessibility and inclusion.

We are proud to work with people and organizations around the province as they create and sustain welcoming communities that are accessible and inclusive for people of all ages and abilities, and for residents and visitors alike.

**BRUCE DEWAR**  
Chief Executive Officer  
2010 Legacies Now

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# The history of Measuring Up


Measuring Up was initiated in 2003 when the City of Vancouver passed a motion to explore ways in which people with disabilities might leverage the benefits of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games to improve accessibility and inclusion. This goal was quickly taken up and supported by a grassroots coalition of disability representatives from throughout British Columbia.

The coalition came together in January 2005 for an unprecedented meeting in Vancouver. At this meeting, it was agreed that improvements in accessibility and inclusion required that people with disabilities be better represented in community planning and decision-making. The coalition agreed that changes would require stronger relationships with local government and business leaders. It was also agreed that the process of change would be different in every community.

Initial support and funding for Measuring Up was provided by the Vancouver Agreement before the program's transfer to 2010 Legacies Now in 2005. In 2007 and 2008, funding totalling \$2.62 million was provided by the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.

The first version of the Measuring Up guide was created as a result of extensive consultation with the coalition and with the support of government and business leaders. The goal of the first guide was to provide a starting point for communities to begin discussing, assessing, understanding and improving community accessibility and inclusion. Between 2006 and 2009, the guide provided a framework for over 100 communities throughout British Columbia to implement Measuring Up.

This second version of the Measuring Up guide builds on the content of the first guide. It includes lessons learned from communities implementing Measuring Up and provides additional tools to help communities move beyond dialogue to action.



“Our experience being involved in Measuring Up in Abbotsford has been extremely positive. What I appreciate most about this project is that the community comes together on common issues of inclusion and accessibility and begins working in concert with one another. We have accomplished so much more as an orchestra than we ever could have playing our drum alone. We envision this partnership will sustain our efforts for many years to come and impact Abbotsford on many levels of community involvement.”

ANNETTE BORROWS  
Abbotsford Measuring Up Working Group

## An Introduction to Measuring Up

The Measuring Up program supports communities across British Columbia to become more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. By improving accessibility and becoming more inclusive, communities become welcoming not only for residents and visitors with disabilities, but also for older people, people pushing baby carriages or carrying luggage, and those with temporary injuries.

Measuring Up was developed by 2010 Legacies Now in partnership with the Vancouver Agreement, the Province of British Columbia, and over 80 disability organizations throughout British Columbia. Measuring Up works to generate and sustain welcoming, accessible,

and inclusive communities. It also aims to foster opportunities for the active engagement, participation and contribution of people with disabilities in their communities.

The Measuring Up guide offers a structure to support communities through an ongoing and collaborative process to ensure that all residents and visitors can participate in a community, access its services, and benefit from its amenities.

As companions to the Measuring Up guide, 2010 Legacies Now has developed several additional resources to support communities in becoming more accessible and inclusive.

These resources range from information on how to plan and host an accessible public event, to passing a local government motion and using plain language.

The resources are available online at [2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring\\_up/](http://2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring_up/).

## FOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The process of becoming more inclusive and accessible, as outlined in this guide, is led by the four guiding principles of Measuring Up:

**1. Empowering** - focuses on empowering communities to improve accessibility and inclusion for their residents in the way that works best for their community.

**2. Practical** - provides useful tools for ongoing community assessment and action to improve local accessibility and inclusion for all community members.

**3. Inclusive** - promotes a broad understanding of accessibility and inclusion that encompasses the whole community, including people with varying levels of physical, mental, social and emotional abilities; people of different ages; and people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

**4. Collaborative** - realizes the capacity of all people to contribute positively to their community and to participate in the planning and decision-making that affect their lives.

## How to use this guide

Every community is at a different place when it comes to accessibility and inclusion. This guide will support your community in identifying barriers to participation, and taking action to overcome them in order to be more welcoming and inclusive for all.

There is more than one way to become more accessible and inclusive. The path will be

different in every community and suited to local needs, strengths and goals. This guide is, therefore, not a set of rules, but rather a resource of ideas and suggestions that you might consider, use and adapt according to the needs and diversity of your community.

The Measuring Up process of assessing accessibility and inclusion is not about 'measuring up' to an external standard; it is about making a community a better place to live, work, play and visit for people with disabilities. Your community should focus on the sections and tools that are most helpful to your local situations. You can also print individual sections of this guide for your use. While the guide outlines 10 steps, not every community will follow this sequence or start with Step 1.

You can use this guide to:

- Start a discussion about accessibility and inclusion in your community;
- Conduct a community assessment;
- Motivate and engage community members to get involved; and
- Develop an action plan to address local accessibility and inclusion.



**Note:**

This guide contains useful information for anyone who is looking to improve accessibility and inclusion, including individuals, organizations, businesses and communities. However, the guide specifically focuses on local governments and non-profit organizations that are seeking to make changes at the community level.



**What is accessibility and inclusion?**

Accessibility refers to homes, buildings, public spaces, technology, programs and support services being free of barriers, enabling all people to use them independently.

Inclusion refers to welcoming and enabling participation from everyone, so all members of a community feel included and feel like they belong.

Visit [2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring\\_up/](http://2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring_up/) for a glossary of Measuring Up terms.



# Why it is important to be accessible and inclusive

Being accessible and inclusive to everyone means all residents are welcomed as active participants in community life. This means that all community members, including people with disabilities, are considered in the planning of public spaces, private facilities, policies and programs. This also means recognizing that everyone has something to contribute to their community.

The health, well-being and strength of a community lies in the participation of all its members. Communities that enable and welcome the contributions of everyone are stronger and more resilient in response to social and demographic shifts, and can better take advantage of economic change. Full community participation also influences the well-being of

the community by enabling people to live in their community of choice, shop locally, and contribute their skills and talents locally.

Small changes within a community, such as including symbols on signs, expanding inclusive recreation programming or installing a sidewalk ramp, can have a huge impact on the everyday lives of many individuals. Accessible and inclusive communities benefit from the participation of a larger, more diverse population, as well as from broader community engagement.



## Did you know?

In British Columbia people with disabilities make up 16 per cent of the total provincial population, one of the highest rates in the country. This is, in part, due to B.C.'s aging population. According to Statistics Canada\*, approximately 30 per cent of people in B.C. aged 65-74, and approximately 50 per cent of people aged 75 and over, report living with a disability.

\*Participation and Activity and Limitation Survey 2006, [statcan.gc.ca](http://statcan.gc.ca)

## A VISION OF AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

In a fully accessible and inclusive community:

- All community members have access to opportunities to work, volunteer and invest in their community;
- Everyone is welcome to provide input on issues of policy and governance;
- The built environment, including housing and public spaces, is constructed to be barrier-free and accessible to all residents;
- All community members feel safe in their community and know how to seek help in case of an emergency;
- Accessible public transit and parking spaces are available to ensure all residents are able to get around;
- Everyone has access to education opportunities available in the community, and is supported to have their educational needs met in an equitable way;
- All community members have access to natural spaces and have opportunities to contribute to the health of the natural environment;
- Public events, celebrations and cultural experiences are held for all residents to enjoy, both as participants and observers;
- Everyone is welcome, and has the opportunity to access and participate in community recreation, leisure, sport and the arts;
- Public information is shared in a variety of ways so it can be heard, seen and understood by people of differing sensory and mental abilities;
- All community members can access the services and personal supports, including assistive and accessible technology, which they require to participate in community life; and
- There is an ongoing commitment to reviewing and improving community accessibility and inclusion.

This list provides an ultimate vision, or set of goals, for communities aiming to become more accessible and inclusive. However, achieving these goals requires an ongoing process that cannot be completed quickly. Nor is there a state of perfection that should be reached. Rather, an inclusive and welcoming community is one that is committed, over time, to improving access and inclusion for all its members.



### Need help?

The Province of British Columbia's Personal Supports Program connects British Columbians with the personal supports, including assistive and accessible technology, which they need to participate fully in their communities. For more information, visit [personalsupports.bc.ca](https://personalsupports.bc.ca)



## Community spotlight on the West Shore

### **A personal quest for accessibility and inclusion**

Marnie Essery, chair of the West Shore Intermunicipal Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (IACDI), is a community champion for people with disabilities, and with more accessible and inclusive communities for everyone.

As a young child growing up on Vancouver Island, Marnie was diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis, an experience which has fueled her commitment to more than 28 non-profit community groups which she works with as a volunteer. With a degree in Elementary Education from the University of Victoria, specializing in counselling and learning assistance, as well as certification in Learning Assistance Teaching, Marnie believes learning is a life-long process. She says, “When it comes to people with disabilities, I’ve been teaching people for my entire life.”

In her role with IACDI, a shared committee of Colwood, Langford, Highlands, Metchosin and View Royal, Marnie works with representatives from the municipalities, non-profit organizations and the communities at large to advocate for communities that are safe and inclusive for people of all ages and abilities. With Marnie’s leadership, each municipality on the committee has completed a Measuring Up community assessment and implemented improvements which, Marnie explains, “are not only benefiting their residents, but are also being appreciated by families, seniors, visitors and the general population.”

More information on IACDI’s work, including completed Measuring Up projects, is available at [colwood.ca](http://colwood.ca) and [iacdi.netfirms.com](http://iacdi.netfirms.com).

For more stories of how 2010 Legacies Now is supporting communities throughout B.C. to discover and create lasting legacies, visit [2010andBeyond.ca](http://2010andBeyond.ca).

## A PROPOSED STRUCTURE

Accessibility and inclusion touch many aspects of a community and there are many overlapping components to each of these concepts. People can have different ideas of what these concepts mean. As a result, accessibility and inclusion can sometimes be difficult to explain.

This proposed structure presents one way to help you understand the different components of an accessible and inclusive community, and consists of five areas of community life which need to be considered, when addressing accessibility and inclusion.

These are:

- **Living** in the community
- **Getting around** in the community
- **Working** in the community
- **Playing** in the community
- **Visiting** in the community

The five areas offer a starting point for discussions about accessibility and inclusion in your community. There may also be other areas of community life that you would like to include in your discussions.



<sup>1</sup> This structure is based on a framework created by the City of Quesnel and the Measuring Up the North program, as a result of their experiences in implementing Measuring Up.

# Assess and improve accessibility and inclusion

Accessibility and inclusion issues are specific to each community, and each community's process of making improvements is unique. Recognizing that each community might take a different approach, the following 10 steps offer a process that many Measuring Up communities have successfully followed to assess and improve local accessibility and inclusion.

- Step 1: Establish a committee
- Step 2: Identify a leader
- Step 3: Build support and awareness
- Step 4: Engage the community
- Step 5: Assess local accessibility and inclusion
  - a) Living in the community
  - b) Getting around in the community
  - c) Working in the community
  - d) Playing in the community
  - e) Visiting the community
- Step 6: Identify strengths and weaknesses
- Step 7: Set priorities
- Step 8: Develop an action plan
- Step 9: Celebrate successes
- Step 10: Start again



## Community spotlight on Queen Charlotte

### **A northern leader in accessibility and inclusion**

A small, rural community nestled on the north island of Haida Gwaii, the Village of Queen Charlotte is a leader in improving accessibility and inclusion. By bringing together a small group of community leaders, including an elected official, key individuals and local service providers, the Village completed an accessibility assessment of all public and private buildings. The Village also partnered with local media to raise awareness in the community by hosting a public film night and publishing related articles in the local newspaper.

Based on the assessment results, and with support from the Measuring Up, accessible public washrooms were installed at the local library and community hall, and the Village created a job-skills development program for people with mental health and other disabilities. Facilitated by a local service provider, the employment program supports people from across the Island in developing relevant job skills and networking with local employers.

For more stories of how 2010 Legacies Now is supporting communities throughout B.C. to discover and create lasting legacies, visit [2010andBeyond.ca](http://2010andBeyond.ca).

## STEP 1: ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE

Like most community initiatives, a process to assess and improve local accessibility and inclusion will be led by a core group of dedicated community members. This committee will make the key decisions related to planning and implementing your process, especially at the beginning. This may be an existing group, such as a disability advisory committee, or it could be a new group formed for the purpose of assessing and making improvements around community accessibility and inclusion.

The group of community representatives that make up your committee should be people who are aware of accessibility and inclusion issues and who can influence the local government and business sectors. Local government councillors or staff, community leaders who may

have a personal or professional point of view on disability, important local employers and representatives of social service organizations are ideal candidates for your committee. In order to ensure that you are including the widest possible range of experiences in your process, it's also important to consider if your group includes people who can bring perspectives from the following areas:

- People with a range of disabilities including hearing, visual, physical, developmental, intellectual, learning and mental health disabilities, as well as other temporary or chronic health conditions. The experience of living with a disability is unique for every



### Need help?

For more information on respectful language and the positive portrayal of people with disabilities, consult **A Way with Words and Images** available from **Human Resources and Skills Development Canada** at [hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability\\_issues/reports/way\\_with\\_words](https://hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/reports/way_with_words).

### TIPS FOR FORMING A COMMITTEE

- Issue personal invitations to key people in your community
- Advertise in a local paper or on a local radio station to ask for community representatives to step forward
- Tap into already existing formal or informal networks of community social service organizations

individual. As such, it is important to include as many perspectives as possible to avoid generalizations.

- Older people
- Local government (elected officials and staff)
- Aboriginal representatives
- Social services
- Health services
- Education services
- Ethno-cultural services
- Housing groups

- Transportation groups
- Local tourism
- Local businesses or chamber of commerce
- Other groups or individuals important in your community

Once you have this committee together, you may wish to develop a terms of reference document to clarify what your group is trying to achieve and what is expected of each individual in the group.



#### Need help?

Visit [2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring\\_up/](http://2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring_up/) for more information on how to **form your committee**, including **two sample terms of reference**, and tips for **resolving potential committee conflict**.

## STEP 2: IDENTIFY A LEADER

As with any community process, working to improve local accessibility and inclusion requires time and attention to keep the process on track. For many communities, hiring a coordinator or dedicating staff or volunteer time to the process can be very important for their success. It also helps to identify an individual who will lead your committee.

While there are many different styles and approaches of leadership, strong group leaders

tend to be those who can effectively focus the energy of the group on achieving your goals. Other common characteristics of good leaders include:

- Understanding group dynamics;
- Working well within a group and sharing responsibility; and
- Making sure everyone is encouraged to participate.



## STEP 3: BUILD SUPPORT AND AWARENESS

An important preliminary step for your committee will involve building support and commitment for improving accessibility and inclusion from members of the community. This will involve increasing awareness of the importance of accessibility and inclusion in your community and why they are important. It will also mean inspiring people about the potential impact they could have by getting involved.

Many of the communities that have participated Measuring Up formalized this support and commitment by passing a local government motion. A motion can be an excellent way to express your community's commitment to becoming more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

Passing a local government motion is not the only way to formalize commitment to your process. Other approaches include:

- Identifying local champions within your community;
- Providing an opportunity for people to share stories of their experiences dealing with barriers to accessibility and inclusion; and
- Sharing examples from other communities about how they have improved accessibility and inclusion, and the positive impact they have had.



### Need help?

Visit [2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring\\_up/](https://2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring_up/) for tips on **how to pass a local government motion**, including **two sample motions**.

## STEP 4: ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

A thorough and wide-ranging assessment of how accessible and inclusive your community is will require input and involvement from community members beyond your committee. This will require that people understand what accessibility and inclusion means in your community, and why they are important. It will also mean providing community members with an opportunity to share their ideas and views on which areas of local accessibility and inclusion are of the highest priority, and what needs to be improved.

Getting people involved will help you ensure the community is behind the work that your committee is doing, and that it is inspired to be involved in the changes.

This outreach process can be approached in a variety of ways, including:

- Facilitating group workshops;
- Hosting community forums or disability awareness events;

- Organizing personal interviews;
- Holding focus groups or discussion sessions; and
- Establishing a website or blog page for people to share their thoughts online.

Building relationships and partnerships with organizations and individuals who have influence or who provide key services in your community can help spread the word about your project, and get people interested and involved.

Working with the local media can also be extremely useful. Media coverage can help share information, attract new supporters, celebrate successes, and engage community members. No matter how you choose to engage your community, it will be useful to have clear information about your project and goals to help people understand what you are doing and why it matters.



### Need help?

Visit [2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring\\_up/](https://2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring_up/) for tips on how to plan **accessible public events**. For more information on **working with the media**, including a **sample media release**, consult tools available from Volunteer B.C. at [volunteerbc.bc.ca/tools/mediarelations.html](https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/tools/mediarelations.html)

## STEP 5: ASSESS LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

A good first step towards making your community more accessible and inclusive is to do a self-assessment of how accessible and inclusive it is today. This will involve looking at the different areas of community life from the perspective of people with disabilities as well as other members of your community including people of different ages and cultures, and people with English as a second language.

This assessment will help to recognize and celebrate what is done well, and to identify what needs improvement. If your community has conducted similar assessments in the past, these will provide a great starting point.

Each of the five areas of community life described on pg 7 – living, getting around, working, playing and visiting – are featured on the following pages, along with questions to prompt discussions about accessibility and inclusion in that area. While these questions are a good place to start, they may not be the only ones you want to ask. They are meant to help you start thinking about the different types of barriers and opportunities related to accessibility and inclusion that might exist in your community.

Discussing the assessment questions may require a variety of activities, including:

- Collecting statistics;
- Conducting interviews, focus groups, or surveys

to gather stories and experiences;

- Documenting existing policies and procedures; and
- Reporting on other actions related to community accessibility and inclusion.

The approach you take will depend on what works best in your community.

The important thing to remember is that the purpose of the assessment is not to rank your community's accessibility and inclusion against other communities; rather, it is a tool for self-assessment and a way to chart your progress.

While some communities may choose to assess all five areas of community life, others may focus on just one or two of the areas. Some communities may find that choosing one or two areas of focus allows them to concentrate their resources and channel greater community participation towards a clear set of goals. Other communities may find there are different or additional areas and questions that are important to explore. The approach you take, and where you decide to focus, will depend on what works best for your community.



## Community spotlight on Kamloops

### **Kamloops measures up**

The City of Kamloops was an early adopter of Measuring Up, joining the program as a pilot community in 2006. Kamloops focused on completing an in-depth and highly participatory community assessment, which involved consultation with all sectors of the community, including neighbouring Aboriginal communities. A steering committee, with representatives from all three levels of government, social service organizations and community leaders hired a coordinator to help them complete this assessment. The assessment included a questionnaire, an open community forum, and focus group discussions.

From this process, Kamloops developed a strategic report identifying projects for action, a number of which have already been implemented. Key successes include developing an awareness and education session for municipal staff and local transit operators, and improving the snow removal process from bus stops to maintain their accessibility over the winter.

With the strong leadership provided by the steering committee, Measuring Up work is moving forward in Kamloops as the municipality continues to strive towards an accessible and inclusive community for everyone. More information on Measuring Up in Kamloops is available at [kamloops.ca](http://kamloops.ca).

For more stories of how 2010 Legacies Now is supporting communities throughout B.C. to discover and create lasting legacies, visit [2010andBeyond.ca](http://2010andBeyond.ca).

## A) LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

There are two aspects of living in the community to consider when addressing accessibility and inclusion:

- People's experiences with the built environment, or the physical, human-made spaces or structures in a community, such as buildings, homes, sidewalks, trails and parks.
- People's experiences with community programs, policies, planning and decision making processes.

Being accessible and inclusive in relation to living in the community means ensuring that the built environment, as well as the process through which programs and policies are planned and decided upon, are welcoming and inclusive for everyone.

Considering the built environment means looking at how the physical parts of your community are planned, designed and built for everyone to use.

**Universal Design** is an approach to building and design which ensures that human-made structures are usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation. There are seven principles of Universal Design:

- 1) **Equity:** The built environment is useful to people with diverse abilities.
- 2) **Flexibility:** The built environment accommodates a wide range of abilities.
- 3) **Simplicity:** The built environment is easy to navigate and understand.
- 4) **Perceptible Information:** The built environment, and the design of the elements within it, communicates necessary information effectively regardless of a person's sensory abilities or any background conditions, using a number of different modes (e.g. technological, verbal, tactile, pictures, etc.)

5) **Tolerance:** The built environment minimizes hazards and safety concerns.

6) **Low Physical Effort:** The built environment can be used easily with minimal effort.

7) **Appropriate Size and Space:** The built environment is sized to accommodate everyone's approach, reach, manipulation and use, regardless of body size, posture or mobility.

These principles were adapted from information available from **The Centre for Universal Design**. For more information on Universal Design, visit [design.ncsu.edu/cud/](https://design.ncsu.edu/cud/).

Ensuring that all residents are able to live comfortably, safely and independently in the community also requires considering the wide variety of financial, technological and social barriers that can be present.

Some questions to ask when assessing this aspect of living in the community:

- To what extent are issues of accessibility considered in community planning and design decisions?
- To what extent are people working in key positions in your community (e.g. government employees, library workers, parks and recreation staff, emergency personnel, etc.) trained in meeting the needs and ensuring the safety of all residents?
- Is accessible technology available for community use, such as TTY (telephone typewriter) public phones, or screen magnification options on public computers?
- Are public buildings, such as schools, malls, community and recreation centres, hospitals and medical centres, government offices and churches, accessible for everyone in your community?



#### Need help?

Visit [2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring\\_up/](http://2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring_up/) for tools to help you **self-assess your community's built environment.**

- Are new buildings and renovations designed and built based on the principles of universal design?
- Are washrooms in public buildings and spaces accessible for people with a range of disabilities?
- Are there a variety of housing types available in your community, to provide options for residents of all abilities and ages?
- To what extent can people with disabilities and older people access the supports they need to live in their homes and live as independently as they choose?
- Are new homes being built to be accessible to people with disabilities and adaptable to the needs of an aging population?
- Is there financially-supported housing available for lower income residents?
- Do residents of all ages and abilities in your community feel safe and know how to seek help in an emergency?



#### Need help?

For more information on **adaptable and visitable housing**, consult tools available from **Concrete Change** at, [concretechange.org](http://concretechange.org), and the **Canadian Centre on Disability Studies** at [visitablehousingcanada.com](http://visitablehousingcanada.com).

Considering the program, policies, planning and decision-making processes in a community means thinking about the extent to which the whole community, including people with disabilities, are involved in their development, implementation and review. Being accessible and inclusive in this way means having policies and programs that integrate the principles of accessibility and inclusion into everyday operations. It also means ensuring that all community members have an opportunity and are welcomed to provide input on decisions and planning processes that affect them.

This aspect of living in the community is also about ensuring information, including information available online, is communicated and presented in a manner that is clear and easy for all community members to understand. This also involves being sensitive to the language being used when communicating to ensure it is positive and respectful of everyone's needs and abilities.

Some questions to ask when assessing this aspect of living in the community:

- Are principles of inclusion included in your local government's vision and mission statements?
- Are principles of inclusion, and action items to support these principles, included in your local government's Official Community Plan?
- Does the whole community, including people with disabilities, have the opportunity to participate in the development, implementation and review of local government policies, programs and plans?
- Does your local government, and other key community organizations, provide materials and information in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, plain language and audio?
- Are the websites of your local government and other key community organizations designed so everyone, including people with visual disabilities, can access them?



#### **Need help?**

Visit [2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring\\_up/](https://2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring_up/) for more information on how to use **plain language**, develop an **accessible website**, and complete a **self-assessment of your local government's daily operations**.



### **What is an Official Community Plan (OCP)?**

An OCP is an important part of local government as it provides a long-term vision for a community, for five or more years. An OCP is a local government bylaw that states community goals and provides an overall framework for decisions on planning, land-use, housing, building and other development, social policies and programs, environmental preservation, neighbourhood character, and much more.

For more information on creating an **accessible and inclusive Official Community Plan**, visit [2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring\\_up/](https://2010LegaciesNow.com/measuring_up/)

## **B) GETTING AROUND IN THE COMMUNITY**

This area of community life involves people's ability to get around to safely and comfortably carry out daily tasks such as working, going to school, shopping or going to appointments. This area is also about being able to get to, and participate in, social, cultural, environmental, volunteer and recreational activities<sup>2</sup>.

Ensuring that all residents are able to travel safely in the community requires thinking about the whole range of public and private, motorized and non-motorized transportation options. If a community is on a waterway, boat travel should also be considered.

Some questions to ask when assessing this area of community life:

- To what extent do all residents have a variety of transportation options for getting around your community?
- Is it easy for all residents to independently find their way around your community?
- To what extent are issues of accessibility considered in local transportation planning?
- For people driving vehicles:
  - Are the roads in good condition?
  - Is there good visibility for drivers?

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from - Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors: Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide, seniorsincommunities.ca.



- Is there adequate parking, marked and located near important services, for those that cannot walk great distances?
- Are the roads cleared of snow and ice in the winter?
- For people using public transportation:
  - Is there a public transit system or informal shuttle service that is accessible and available to all?
  - To what extent can residents in your community get around via public transit?
  - Are there supports in place to ensure that public transit is affordable to all?
  - Is transit information and signage easy to find, see and understand?
  - Is transit information provided in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, plain language, and audio?
  - Are all transit stops and stations easily visible and accessible?
- Are accessible taxis available to community members and visitors who need them?
- For people travelling by foot, wheelchair or scooter:
  - Are scooters able to travel safely away from traffic and pedestrians?
  - Are the sidewalks, pathways and trails walkable and in good condition?
  - Are there shops and services within walking distance of where people live?
  - Are the sidewalks in your community continuous with low curbs or curb-cuts to accommodate wheelchairs, scooters and strollers?
  - Are the sidewalks cleared of snow and ice in the winter?



### **Need help?**

For more information on accessible transportation, consult information available from **Transport Canada's Accessible Transportation initiative at [tc.gc.ca](http://tc.gc.ca)**.



## Community spotlight on Abbotsford

### **A model for Measuring Up**

The City of Abbotsford is a prime example of a community demonstrating Measuring Up success. As a result of its involvement with Measuring Up, the Access Abbotsford committee has increased local employment of people with disabilities by more than 300 people since October 2007. The committee has also improved accessible recreation opportunities for children with disabilities, and implemented a range of transportation and infrastructure projects.

One exciting project to come from Access Abbotsford is the development of an accessible bus stop, funded in part by the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the Jim Pattison Group and the City of Abbotsford, and designed with input from a wide-range of community members. The bus stop has a large, paved surface with tactile sections at the front to alert people with visual disabilities of the curb. There are also a number of handlebars and an open section in the back panel to enable people using wheelchairs or other mobility aides to easily access the stop. This bus stop sets a standard of accessibility for other communities and transit operators to strive to achieve, the design of which is now available through the Jim Pattison Group.

Visit [accessabbotsford.ca](http://accessabbotsford.ca) for more information about Abbotsford's efforts to be an accessible and inclusive community for everyone.

For more stories of how 2010 Legacies Now is supporting communities throughout B.C. to discover and create lasting legacies, visit [2010andBeyond.ca](http://2010andBeyond.ca).

## C) WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY

This area of community life relates to people's ability to find, be hired for, and keep meaningful employment in their community. It is also about increasing a community's labour pool and its economic capacity by recognizing the employment potential of all community members, including people with disabilities.

A community's labour pool and its economic capacity can be increased through accessible and inclusive hiring and employment practices. It is a wise business practice for employers to tap into all available talent pools to access skilled workers, including people with disabilities. Accessible and inclusive employment practices are also important for individual's self esteem, sense of self-worth and economic viability.

Some questions to ask when assessing this area of community life:

- Does the makeup of the local workforce match that of the local working-aged population?
- To what extent are employers in your community aware of the benefits of having an inclusive workplace?
- Is the hiring of underrepresented groups, including people with disabilities, part of your community's economic plan?
- Are employers open to flexible job requirements (e.g. part-time hours, job-sharing, alternate work arrangements) to accommodate employees who require an alternative way to perform a job?
- Do working parents have affordable and accessible options for child care?
- Are all workers, including people with disabilities, fairly paid?



### Need help?

For more information on **becoming a disability-confident employer** and on ensuring **community contracts and tenders contribute to accessibility and inclusion**, visit **accessWORKS**, an initiative dedicated to advancing the economic inclusion of people with disabilities in British Columbia at **[accessworks.ca](https://accessworks.ca)**.

- Are there outreach activities in your community to help employers to reach all potential job candidates?
- Is workplace disability awareness training provided by employers in your community?
- To what extent are employers confident in supporting and providing appropriate accommodations for employees with disabilities?
- To what extent are job descriptions written to be inclusive and welcoming of all candidates?
- Are job postings available in a variety of formats such as Braille, large print, plain language and audio?
- Are local government tenders accessible and do they reward businesses that meet standards of accessibility and inclusivity?
- Are there a range of volunteer opportunities available in your community for older people and those with disabilities?
- Are workplace training and education opportunities available for all, including those who may require additional support or accommodations?



### Need help?

For more information on the **benefits of hiring people with disabilities**, visit the Province of British Columbia's **10 by 10 Employment Challenge** at [10by10challenge.gov.bc.ca](http://10by10challenge.gov.bc.ca).

Job seekers or interested employers can also visit the Province of British Columbia's **WorkAble Solutions** website, which **connects job seekers with disabilities to potential employers** through online job posting and search tools at [workablesolutionsbc.ca](http://workablesolutionsbc.ca).

## D) PLAYING IN THE COMMUNITY

This area of community life is about ensuring that everyone is able and welcome to take part in the leisure, recreation, sport, social, cultural and spiritual activities going on in a community. Social participation and social supports can strongly influence an individual's and a community's well-being. Participating in social and recreational activities can enable people to live up to their potential, develop positive self esteem, and establish and maintain supportive and caring relationships. Inclusive social and recreational opportunities can also foster a greater sense of community.

Some questions to ask when assessing this area of community life:

- Are there a wide variety of activities offered in your community to appeal to a diverse population of people of different abilities, ages and cultural backgrounds?
  - Are people of different ages, cultural backgrounds and abilities encouraged to participate in community activities?
  - Are the sites of community events and activities accessible to people with a range of disabilities?
  - Are community events and activities accessible to those using public transit?
  - Are events and activities offered at different times of day to fit a variety of personal schedules?
- Is information about community events and activities easy to find and available in a variety of formats such as Braille, large print, plain language, and audio?
  - Are community events and activities affordable? Are there subsidies to help those with lower incomes to participate?
  - Are efforts made to reach out to and engage those members of your community that may be isolated to help facilitate their participation in community activities and events?
  - Are indoor and outdoor leisure and recreation facilities in your community accessible to people with disabilities?
  - Are a wide variety of people included in the planning of community events and activities?
  - Are playgrounds in your community equipped to safely accommodate children with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities?



### Need help?

For more information on how to **plan and design accessible and inclusive outdoor spaces**, consult **Plan and Design for Choice: Universal Design Guidelines for Outdoor Spaces**, a guide developed by the District of Maple Ridge and City of Pitt Meadows Municipal Accessibility Committee as part of their Measuring Up process. The guide is available at [mapleridge.ca](http://mapleridge.ca).



## Community spotlight on Canim Lake Band

### **Making recreation accessible to all**

The Canim Lake Band (Tsq'escen') community is located 20 miles east of 100 Mile House in central British Columbia. As a relatively isolated community, the Band developed a five-year plan to increase community access to sport and recreation opportunities that foster healthy living. Part of this plan included building a multi-use trail system to connect the three main subdivisions of the community.

With support from Measuring Up, and with additional funding from the Interior Health Authority of B.C., the Active Communities initiative and members of the community, the Band financed the building of a two-kilometre trail. Which is accessible for people using wheelchairs, walkers and other mobility aides. By investing in accessible recreation options, the Canim Lake Band is supporting its entire community, regardless of ability, to make healthy lifestyle changes and reach their personal wellness goals.

For more stories of how 2010 Legacies Now is supporting communities throughout B.C. to discover and create lasting legacies, visit [2010andBeyond.ca](http://2010andBeyond.ca).

## E) VISITING THE COMMUNITY

This area of community life is about being open and welcoming to all visitors. Tourism is an important income-generating industry in many communities. A growing portion of travellers are people with disabilities and older people with accessibility needs, as well as the friends, family and caregivers who accompany them. The same services which benefit people with disabilities also benefit people with injuries or other temporary accessibility needs, families using strollers, and travellers pulling luggage.

Travellers with accessibility needs often face barriers in getting around communities they are unfamiliar with. They also may have a difficult time finding places to stay and accessing the various attractions, sites and activities that are available to other tourists.

Considering accessibility for your visitors does not just benefit travellers, it also benefits residents and businesses in your community:

- Consumers get more choice;
- Businesses access a significant and underserved market; and
- Businesses have access to a larger number of employable people.

Some questions to ask when assessing this area of community life:

- Are the sites and attractions that tourists like to visit built using universal design principals (e.g. few stairs, wheelchair ramps that are not too steep, clear signage, flashing alarms, etc.)?
- Are tourism sites and attractions clearly marked to allow for the safe exit of all visitors in the case of an emergency?



### Need help?

2010 Legacies Now, the Province of B.C., Tourism B.C., and other tourism partners are working to make **British Columbia a premier travel destination for people with disabilities**. For more information on how your community or business can get involved in the Accessible Tourism program, visit [accessible-tourism.com](http://accessible-tourism.com).

- Are tourism staff, including those working at hospitality, entertainment and cultural venues, trained in how to accommodate the needs and ensure the comfort of visitors requiring assistance, including in the case of an emergency?
- Are accommodation and camping facilities in your community accessible to those with a variety of abilities?
- Are tourism websites accessible to people with varying abilities?
- Are signs in tourism areas easy to find, see and understand?
- Is tourism information available in a variety of formats such as Braille, large print, plain language and audio?

## STEP 6: IDENTIFY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Once you have assessed the various aspects of accessibility and inclusion in your community, you will be able to identify your community's strengths and weaknesses.

**Strengths** include areas in which your community is already accessible and inclusive. These areas represent practices and examples that the community can share, celebrate and learn from.

**Weaknesses** include areas in which your community needs to improve. The areas where barriers exist can be improved and, in turn, create positive community change.

When discussing your community's strengths and weaknesses with regard to accessibility and inclusion, it is important to remember that

accessibility and inclusion can be complex. For each area of community life, there are varying degrees of both accessibility and inclusion. To help identify strengths and weaknesses, you may want to rank certain aspects of community life along a progressive scale. You may encounter different opinions when talking about and ranking the accessibility and inclusion of various aspects of community life. One person may think something is accessible, while another may not. It may be useful to ask people to explain why not just if they think something is accessible and inclusive, or why they do not.

Keep in mind that not everyone will be able to speak to the accessibility and inclusion of all things and from all perspectives. This is why it is helpful to engage as diverse a group as possible.



A possible progressive scale for ranking accessibility and inclusion is below.

Accessible and Inclusive to a <b>few</b>	Accessible and Inclusive to <b>some</b>	Accessible and Inclusive to <b>many</b>	Accessible and Inclusive to <b>most</b>	Accessible and Inclusive to <b>all</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

## STEP 7: SET PRIORITIES

Identifying strengths and weaknesses around accessibility and inclusion will help you to determine the areas that need improvement. In many communities, this “to do” list might appear long and overwhelming. It is therefore important to narrow down the list to the specific issues that are most urgent, or those that will have the widest impact on the greatest number of people in a community.

It is best to gather broad community input on which items are of the highest priority. You may wish to host a workshop or community forum to ask community members to identify the issues they feel are most important. Alternatively, your committee might want to develop a list of criteria to evaluate each of the areas to determine which issues it should act on first.

Other things to consider when setting priorities for action include:

- How many people are directly and indirectly affected by this issue?
- To what degree does this issue hold back residents from participating in the community?
- Is this an issue that your community can have an immediate impact on?
- Are there individuals or organizations in your community willing to work on this issue?
- Are there resources, both financial and human, available to act on this issue?
- Is there a timeline for addressing this issue? Is this attainable?

By choosing the most achievable, inspiring and affordable projects to complete first, you will be able accomplish success and celebrate early, which can increase community interest and attract new people to your process.

## STEP 8: DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

Once a list of priority issues has been identified, your group will be ready to develop an action plan for improving accessibility and inclusion in your community. An action plan is a road map for making improvements. It specifies what will be done, how and by whom, and will guide your efforts toward achieving your goals.

The five main components of an action plan are:

- **Outcomes:** what the group wants to see as a result of its work;
- **Goals:** what the group aims to achieve and why it's important;
- **Objectives:** what the group intends to accomplish and by when;
- **Strategies:** how the group will accomplish the objectives and achieve the goals, including who will lead them; and

- **Activities:** specific actions related to each of the strategies, which include who will be involved and what resources are required.

Other key considerations in developing an action plan include:

- **Partnerships:** there may be individuals and groups that will be key to implementing the plan. Think about how you will reach out and engage them.
- **Budget:** most projects cost money so it is important to be aware of the costs and have a plan for covering them.

## STEP 9: CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

With your action plan completed, it's time to celebrate your accomplishments. This celebration is for all those who were part of your efforts. Celebrating accomplishments also offers an opportunity to reach out and inspire others to get involved in issues surrounding accessibility and inclusion in your community.

Ways of spreading the word to community members of local projects and outcomes include:

- Local media;
- Community websites;
- Community bulletin boards;
- Information channels of the local government;
- Networks of local organizations; and
- Local community events.



## STEP 10: START AGAIN

Becoming an accessible and inclusive community is an ongoing process that will take place over a period of time. It requires an ongoing commitment to improving the lives of all the members of your community. Upon completing one set of improvements, your community may choose to move on to another area of community life to enhance accessibility and inclusion. This may include conducting another community assessment, revisiting the original list of priorities for further action, determining another focus, or creating another action plan.

Regardless of the next steps your community chooses to take, it is important to keep the dialogue about accessibility and inclusion going. Continuing to build awareness

about accessibility and inclusion will help to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities. It will also ensure your community reaches its maximum potential.

Every improvement your community makes towards becoming more accessible and inclusive will have a positive impact on both individual members and the well-being of the community overall. As you move forward with additional projects, remember to recognize and celebrate what you have already accomplished.



## Community spotlight on Parksville

### **Dedicated to accessibility and inclusion**

It all started in 2008, when two staff members of the City of Parksville, located on the beautiful coast of Vancouver Island, heard about the Measuring Up program and realized that their dream of building an accessible and inclusive community could become a reality.

With support from Measuring Up, the City formed a committee and hired a coordinator to work with local businesses and the community to determine accessibility and inclusion priorities. A number of projects emerged from this process including the development of Parksville's Building Access Handbook, which features information about universal design, contains an accessibility survey, and provides information on available community resources.

Building on this success, the City has committed to improving accessibility and inclusion in Parksville over the long-term by supporting and endorsing the committee to start again in assessing and determining community priorities for action. To find out more, or to download a copy of Parksville's Building Access Handbook, visit [accessparkville.ca](http://accessparkville.ca).

For more stories of how 2010 Legacies Now is supporting communities throughout B.C. to discover and create lasting legacies, visit [2010andBeyond.ca](http://2010andBeyond.ca).

# Acknowledgements

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## ORGANIZATIONS

accessWORKS

Access Abbotsford

Access in the Community for Equality  
Community Committee

Acorn Canada

Age-Friendly Communities Initiative

BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society

Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion

BC Blind Sports

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities

BC Council for Families

BC Federation of Labour

BC Government and Service Employees' Union

BC Human Resources Management Association

BC Paraplegic Association

BC Special Olympics

Canadian Abilities Foundation

Canadian Business for Social Responsibility

Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work

Canadian Mental Health Association

Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Canim Lake Band

Center for Tourism Policy & Research

City of Burnaby - Advisory Committee on  
Disability Issues

City of Kamloops

City of Quesnel

City of Revelstoke

City of Terrace

City of Vancouver

City of Victoria - Advisory Committee on  
Disability Issues

Coast Foundation Society

Coast Mental Health Foundation

ComPACT

Demal Services Inc.

Developmental Disabilities Association

Disability Resource Centre, UBC

District of 100 Mile House

District of Sooke

District of Squamish - Accessibility Advisory  
Committee

District of West Vancouver

Douglas College

Fast Track to Employment

Food & Service Resource Group

Fraser Health Authority

Government of British Columbia

Greater Vancouver Regional District

Hey-way'-noqu' Healing Circle for Addictions  
Society

IAM CARES Society

Independent Living Vernon

International Collaboration On Repair  
Discoveries

International Paralympic Committee

Information and Advocacy Network  
International Paralympic Committee  
Kindale Developmental Association  
Leadership Vancouver  
London Metropolitan University  
Lotte & John Hecht Memorial Foundation  
Mainstream Association for Proactive  
Community Living  
Measuring Up the North  
Mission Association for Community Living  
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada  
Neil Squire Foundation  
Nelson CARES Society  
North Shore Disability Resource Centre  
North Thompson Volunteer and Information  
Centre  
Office of the Advocate for Service Quality  
Office of the Minister of Public Works and  
Government Services  
Opportunities through Rehabilitation and  
Work  
Partnership Action Choices and Transitions  
Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee  
Philia  
Phoenix Rising Solutions  
Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network  
Polaris Employment Services  
Powell River Measuring Up Committee  
Powell River Model Community Initiative  
Prime Minister's External Advisory Committee  
on Cities and Communities

Prince George Independent Living Complex  
Development Committee  
Quesnel Child Development Centre  
Rick Hansen Man In Motion Foundation  
S.D. #34 (Abbotsford)  
SAFERhome Standards Society  
Sharing Our Futures Foundation  
Simon Fraser University  
Social Planning & Research Council of BC  
Society for Disability Arts and Culture  
Surrey Tourism & Convention Association  
Team Nanaimo  
Tourism Vancouver  
TransLink  
United Way of the Lower Mainland  
University of British Columbia  
United Way of the Lower Mainland  
United Way Fraser Valley  
Vancouver Agreement  
Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation  
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority  
Vancouver Foundation  
Village of Queen Charlotte  
Vision for People with Disabilities Advisory  
Committee  
Westshore Parks and Recreation  
Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of  
Hearing  
And Others



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