



HARRISON HOT SPRINGS

Naturally Refreshed

Village of Harrison Hot Springs

Accessibility Plan



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Section 1: Introduction

1.A About The Village of Harrison Hot Springs

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs is located on the south shore of the beautiful glacier fed Harrison Lake in the eastern reaches of the Fraser Valley, approximately 140 km from Vancouver. Today, the Village has a population of approximately 1,900. The Village is a member of the Fraser Valley Regional District with our immediate neighbour being the town of Agassiz in the District of Kent.

Our vision is a residential and resort community focused on maintaining an attractive and inviting village core, with a strong commitment to preserving the scenic qualities, the environment and quality of life.

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs will provide exceptional leadership to its residents, businesses and visitors through partnerships and the provision of effective and community focused services.



1.B Our Accessibility Story

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs welcomes up to 750,000 visitors annually along with the approximately 1,900 residents who call the Village of Harrison Hot Springs home. We want to ensure accessibility for all visitors and residents now, and in the future.

In 2018 a Facility Assessment and Recommendations report was produced as part of an Accessibility Initiative. This report and its recommendations helped to formulate this initial Accessibility Plan. In 2019 the Village installed Mobi-Mats to allow water access at the beachfront lagoon for those who use wheelchairs or mobility aids. The addition of an accessible playground was a selected project for the Village's 2022-2025 Resort Development Strategy, a component of being a recognized resort municipality by the province. This playground is set to begin construction in 2024.

The initial Accessibility Plan has been developed by Village staff to meet the requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act. Our initial call-out for members to join the Accessibility Committee did not result in any applications. We chose to get started with a staff-led Accessibility Committee with plans for ongoing recruitment of community members.

Photo Credit: Tourism Harrison River Valley



1.C Acknowledgements

The Village would like to thank the Disability Alliance of BC for their support and resources for creating this Accessibility Plan.

1.D Territorial Acknowledgement

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of Sts'ailes.

1.E Definitions as per the Accessible British Columbia Act

“barrier” is anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment;

“disability” means an inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier;

“impairment” includes a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary or episodic.

“Indigenous peoples” has the same meaning as in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Types of Barriers

Accessibility barriers can include a variety of types such as: physical, sensory, technological, attitudinal, and organizational/systemic.



Section 2: The Guiding Framework

2.A Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA)

The Accessible BC Act was enacted in June 2021 and effective September 1, 2023 all municipalities are required to have the following:

- An accessibility committee;
- An accessibility plan; and
- A tool to receive feedback on accessibility.

Eight types of accessibility standards will be utilized to remove or prevent barriers: employment, delivery of services, the built environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education, and procurement. When developing and updating our accessibility plan, we will focus on the principles of inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.

2.B Other Legislation

In developing our accessibility plan, we also considered other relevant legislation including, but not limited to: The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Canadian Charter of Rights.

Section 3:

Our Accessibility Committee

3.A Initial Focus of the Committee

Under the ABCA, an Accessibility Committee must be established to provide advice to the organization on their accessibility plan and how to remove and prevent barriers.

The initial focus of the committee was to review the 2018 Access Plan and to bring forward accessibility issues that they have observed or been made aware of to form the basis of the Accessibility Plan.

3.B Recruitment

Following the Village of Harrison Hot Springs August 8, 2023 Council Meeting, notices were posted on our website, Facebook page, local newspaper, and community message boards to call for applications for the Accessibility Committee. We also informed our community partners (Agassiz Harrison Community Services, Agassiz Harrison Healthy Communities, Agassiz Harrison Chamber of Commerce). We did not receive any applications, so we made the decision to start the committee internally with the option for members of the public to apply at any time. In late Fall of 2023, a Council Liaison was appointed to sit on the committee.

Section 4:

Feedback Mechanism

4.A Feedback Mechanism Process

Our website has an 'Accessibility' information page which hosts our feedback form as the primary feedback mechanism.

These submitted forms will be forwarded to:
community@harrisonhotsprings.ca

Alternatively, people can submit feedback directly to this email address or to our reception desk who will pass the information on to the Community Services Department. All feedback received will be acknowledged via a response email to the person who submitted (unless the form is submitted anonymously).

The Accessibility Committee will receive a redacted copy of any feedback received by the Village of Harrison Hot Springs at their next meeting for discussion and help to identify any required actions. Feedback will be openly accepted on an ongoing basis.



Section 5: Identifying Barriers

5.A What We Found

Staff represented by all departments met to discuss accessibility within the Village. This internal review highlighted the need for improvements to signage, facilities, and sidewalks to improve accessibility. We began discussing the importance of viewing Village assets with an equity lens and bringing accessibility into the forefront.

An access scan was run on the Village's primary website which showed that our website is accessible, while also noting areas for improvement.

5.B What We Heard

Initial community feedback received upon launching our feedback mechanism included no wheelchair access at the Harrison Resort Pool (privately owned/operated), concerns for accessible access to swim and paddle in the lagoon and lake, as well as accessible parking at the boat launch. We also received feedback regarding the washroom door at the beach.

5.C Action Taken

Village staff have reviewed the 2018 Access Initiative Report with a focus on increasing access to Village facilities. This report along with new feedback will guide the first accessibility plan towards implementation.

Section 6: Our 3 Year Plan

6.A Priority Areas

The Village's first Accessibility Plan will focus on actionable steps to address physical & environmental barriers as well as information & communication barriers. These two broad categories have been identified as high priority in our community and have the potential to impact a large number of people. To address these accessibility barriers, stakeholders will focus on the following:



Priority 01. Municipal Owned Facilities & Parks



Priority 02. Sidewalks & Pathways



Priority 03. Inclusive Signage

6.B Detailed Plan

Municipal Owned Facilities and Parks

Action	Details	Timeline
Automatic Door Openers	Installed at municipal buildings including accessible washrooms and front entrances	2024-2025
Review all playground and park sites	Identify any barriers to access / participation. Seek to make improvements, and where required, source additional funding for implementation	2024-2026
Audio/visual upgrades at Memorial Hall	Make improvements to support accessible meeting spaces	2024-2025
Increase accessible / inclusive play features at all parks	Seek out funding to purchase and install inclusive playground equipment at existing community parks	2025-2026

6.B Detailed Plan Continued

Sidewalks and Pathways

Action	Details	Timeline
Review of sidewalks	Review sidewalks for safety and accessibility; improve or request improvements to MOTI where applicable	2025-2026
Review of trails / pathways	Review Village trails and pathways for accessibility; seek funding and plan to improve	2025-2026

Inclusive Signage

Action	Details	Timeline
Install new signage to include braille	All municipal owned washrooms will undergo signage replacements to include braille	2024-2025
Ensure parking signage states 'accessible'	All municipal sites with accessible parking stalls will be updated to reflect current, inclusive terminology	2025

Section 7: Monitoring and Evaluation

7.A Monitoring

A monitoring report will be produced on an annual basis and be delivered at the first accessibility committee meeting of the fiscal year. This monitoring report will highlight the progress of each action item and any experienced delays. We will continuously seek input from the community to facilitate the process of monitoring the Village's Accessibility Plan.

7.B Evaluation

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs will conduct a thorough review, evaluation, and update of the accessibility plan at least once every three years from adoption. The updated accessibility plan will be based on public feedback received and produced in consultation with the accessibility committee.

