Passenger Transportation Board

Accessibility Plan

May 2024

![Passenger Transportation Board logo — DRIVING FORWARD, TOGETHER]

Territorial acknowledgement

The Passenger Transportation Board acknowledges the traditional territories of the many diverse Indigenous Peoples in the geographic areas we serve. With gratitude and respect, we acknowledge that the Board's office is located on the traditional unceded territories of the ləkʷəŋən speaking peoples, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations communities, who are the traditional keepers of this land and whose historical relationships with this land continue today.

Contents

Message from the Chair

I am pleased to present the Passenger Transportation Board's inaugural accessibility plan, which outlines the Board's pathway to ensure the accessibility and inclusivity of the Board as an organization. In accordance with the requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act, the Board is committed to addressing any accessibility barriers within our organization for the benefit of all Board members, staff, licensees, and members of the public that interact with the Board. As we proceed in the implementation of this plan and engage in its periodic review, we welcome feedback and comments from all stakeholders to ensure that we remain a barrier-free organization.

Baljinder Narang, Chair

About the Board

The Passenger Transportation Board (Board) is an independent tribunal established in 2004 under the Passenger Transportation Act to regulate and oversee the commercial passenger transportation industry in British Columbia, including taxis, limousines, shuttle vans, inter-city buses, and ride-hailing. The Board makes decisions on licensing of commercial passenger directed vehicles, and it also determines appeals of administrative penalties imposed by the Registrar of Passenger Transportation.

Members of the Board are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and come from diverse backgrounds in business, law, academia, or government. Currently, the Board has seven part-time members, including the Chair, who are supported by 16 full-time staff who are B.C. public servants.

Board Members and staff are committed to fostering a culture of professionalism, administrative fairness, and good governance. Part of this commitment includes ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all Board members, staff, stakeholders, and members of the public who interact with the Board.

For more information, we encourage you to visit our website.

Introduction

Persons with disabilities are known to experience different barriers that prevent their full and equal participation in society. This accessibility plan has been prepared to remove or reduce potential barriers for disabled persons who work or interact with the Board. To be clear, this plan addresses accessibility strictly within Board operations, not the passenger transportation industry at large. Accessibility within the industry is addressed through separate Board policies, terms and conditions of licence, and various legislative and regulatory requirements.

This plan responds to the requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act, an important piece of legislation designed to address barriers in a range of areas for people with disabilities. The Act received royal assent on June 17, 2021.

Through adherence to this accessibility plan and the principles of the Act, the Board is addressing potential barriers to accessibility and inclusion for its members, staff, stakeholders, and the public as they interact with the Board.

Requirements of the Act

Part 3 of the Accessible British Columbia Act requires that three actions be taken to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities who either work in, or interact with, the B.C. government and prescribed organizations:

- Establish an accessibility committee
- Develop an accessibility plan
- Create a tool to receive public feedback on accessibility

Effective September 1, 2024, the Passenger Transportation Board is a prescribed organization under section 8(b) of the Act and the corresponding Accessible BC Regulation section 3(a), and it must comply with these requirements.

Accessibility committee

The Act stipulates that an organization's accessibility committee should include people with lived experience of diverse disabilities and have Indigenous representation. It should also reflect the diversity of the population of B.C.

As the Board is a small organization within the B.C. Public Service, it is exploring opportunities to participate in a joint accessibility committee with other tribunals under the Ministry of Attorney General.

Accessibility plan

As per section 11(1) of the Accessible British Columbia Act, an organization must develop a plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.

This plan addresses the requirement.

Feedback mechanism

Organizations are required to provide a mechanism to receive reports of accessibility barriers experienced by people within and interacting with the organization.

The Board's mechanism for feedback is available via its website, here.

Accessibility principles

Section 11(3) of the Accessible British Columbia Act requires that the development of the accessibility plan must be informed by six principles:

> **11** (3) In developing and updating its accessibility plan, an organization must consider the following principles:
>> (a) inclusion;
>> (b) adaptability;

       (c) diversity;

       (d) collaboration;

       (e) self-determination;

       (f) universal design.

The Board embraces these principles and is committed to promoting accessibility of the Board's services, communications, and workspaces. Details of the Board's current and planned actions are identified through this plan.

Language of disability

The language used to describe those who experience marginalization due to disability is continually evolving. This is indicative of the diversity of disabilities and the variety of individual preferences expressed by disabled persons in describing themselves and their experiences.

For example, the disability community has often discussed the use of person-first versus identity-first language to describe its members. Person-first language highlights the person before the disability (i.e., "person with a disability"), whereas identity-first language places first emphasis on the disability (i.e., "disabled person").

Why different preferences?

Some persons with disabilities do not want to be defined by their disability, condition, or difference, so they prefer person-first language (e.g., "He is a man with a visual impairment" or "He has a visual impairment"). Government organizations typically use person-first language.

People who prefer identity-first language wish to emphasize their disability as an integral part of their social identity (e.g., "She is a blind person" or "She is blind"). They feel person-first language minimizes their identity because it separates them from their disability, condition, or difference.

Disability euphemisms

Beyond these two approaches, many disability euphemisms have emerged such as "differently abled persons" and "persons with special abilities." Some people with disabilities prefer this language to counter negative social stereotypes associated with the term "disabled." However, others with disabilities feel that such euphemisms should be avoided because they are not legally protected terms. The term "disability" is used extensively in legislation related to human rights and accessibility, which means there is greater legal power in using terms and descriptions that incorporate "disability."

In this plan, the Board makes a compromise similar to other organizations by using both person-first and identity-first language. This is an accepted practice for recognizing the different preferences within disability communities.

Social and medical models of disability

Disability is seen differently from the medical and sociological perspectives, and it is important to understand both.

According to the medical perspective, a person's health condition or difference is seen as disabling. Someone with adverse health conditions or differences is seen as needing a medical cure or care.

The sociological perspective regards disability as an outcome of the structural and social barriers created by society. For example, the lack of wheelchair ramps disables individuals who use wheelchairs, not the fact that they use a mobility aid. Website text that does not conform to web accessibility standards is disabling to individuals with vision impairment, not the fact that they are visually impaired.

The medical model focuses on the individual, while the sociological model looks at overarching social and physical constraints. Both models serve to support meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities, and both have helped to inform this accessibility plan.

Types of barriers

The B.C. government's accessibility plan identifies the following types of barriers to participation and inclusion experienced by persons with disabilities:

• **Attitudinal:** When people think and act based upon false assumptions, such as making decisions about people with disabilities without including them, or not believing that a person with a disability can contribute to the workforce.

• **Physical:** When obstacles in an environment make access difficult, such as hosting inaccessible events or meeting spaces, or a washroom with an accessible stall but no automatic door opener.

• **Information or communication:** When disabled people are excluded because they use other ways to communicate, such as using small print or not providing large-print versions of material, or videos, events, or meetings that do not have closed captions.

• **Systemic:** When an organization's policies, practices, or procedures result in exclusion, such as not providing an American Sign Language interpreter or requiring a driver's license for a job that could be reorganized to use another form of transportation.

• **Technology:** When technology can't be accessed by people with disabilities, such as websites, documents, or databases that are not accessible for screen readers, or graphs and charts that are posted without text to explain them.

• **Sensory:** When sensory information such as lights, sounds, and smells prevent participation in the environment, such as co-workers wearing perfume in the workplace or the use of fluorescent lighting in the workplace.

Definitions

• **Accessibility:** The state of having programs, services, and environments that allow all individuals to participate fully in society without encountering barriers. Accessibility is a fundamental aspect of the equity and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

• **Adaptive technology:** Adaptive technology is a subcategory of assistive technology. It refers to something that is specifically designed for disabled people.

• **Assistive technology:** Assistive technology is any piece of equipment, software program, or product system that can be used to maintain or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

• **Barrier:** Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of disabled persons. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies.

• **Disability:** The state of being unable to participate fully and equally in society due to the interaction between an impairment and a barrier.

• **Diversity:** Describes the demographic mix of the workforce. Diversity can be both visible and invisible (e.g., race, disabilities, religion, age, culture, socioeconomic background, family or marital status, neurodiversity, sexuality, gender).

• **Impairment:** A physical, sensory, mental, intellectual, or cognitive limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic.

• **Inclusion:** Describes an environment where every person feels welcomed, respected, and provided with suitable access to support their complete and meaningful participation.

Board accessibility framework

An accessibility framework defines the parameters by which matters related to accessibility are examined and addressed within an organization's operations.

The Board's accessibility framework is structured according to how we promote accessibility for four key groups and individuals within each group:

- Board members and staff
- Applicants and licensees
- General public
- Other ministries, agencies, and local governments

With each of these groups, we consider which accessibility standards are relevant to their interactions with the Board. The Accessibility British Columbia Act outlines eight types of accessibility standards that can be considered, with the understanding that not all standards will be relevant to the operations of every organization:

- Employment
- Delivery of services
- Built environment
- Information and communications
- Transportation
- Health
- Education
- Procurement

In view of the distinct needs of each group, the Board aims to address the following accessibility standards with each:

Board members and staff: built environment, employment, health, education

Applicants and licensees: service delivery, information, and communications

General public: information and communications, employment

Other ministries, agencies, and local governments: information and communications, built environment

Actions to date

The Board has already taken care to address several accessibility requirements, align with accessibility standards, and promote greater accessibility for stakeholders.

Board members and staff

Accessible and inclusive hiring practices

- Board employment practices are inclusive and responsive to staff with disabilities.
- Our employment practices support an accessible, inclusive, and diverse workforce.
- This includes ensuring that our employment practices are inclusive and responsive to staff with disabilities.

Hybrid work model

- The Board implemented a hybrid work model in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the health and safety needs of Board members and staff.
- The hybrid model improves work-life balance and accommodates the diverse needs of staff.

Information and communications

- All Board communications are guided by our new Board style guide. This guide addresses bias-free language according to best practices and expectations for accessible and inclusive communications.

Education

- The Board encourages staff to complete the Diversity and Inclusion Essentials course through the B.C. Public Service Agency LearningHUB.

Employee health and safety

- The Board fosters a workplace that promotes employees' physical and psychological well-being, as well as ensuring the proper resources and supports are in place to promote well-being for all Board members and staff.
- The Board encourages staff to take wellness courses offered by the LearningHUB.

Applicants and licensees

Accessible website

- The Board website was redesigned in 2023 to conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- All new website content is formatted according to WCAG.

General public

Accessible website

- The Board website was redesigned in 2023 to conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- All new website content is formatted according to WCAG.

Other ministries, agencies and local governments

Built environment

- The Board office in Victoria is wheelchair accessible and located on main public transit lines, in close proximity to other stakeholder ministries and agencies.

Accessible website

- The Board website was redesigned in 2023 to conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). All new website content is formatted according to WCAG.

Priorities for 2024-2026

These are the Board's priorities for ensuring and wherever possible enhancing accessibility over the next three years.

Board members and staff

Built environment

- Identify any remaining built elements that might prevent accessibility in the Board office.

Information and communications

- Apply a Gender Based Analysis plus (GBA+) lens to all internal communications.
- Direct staff attention to any new B.C. public service communications that raise awareness on accessibility.

Education

- Continue to promote a culture of accessibility and inclusion.
- Encourage staff to continue their professional development by taking courses through the LearningHUB on accessibility, inclusion, and wellness.
- Ensure staff are apprised of new developments in policy and practice around accessibility and align this knowledge with applicable policy projects.

Health and safety

- Continue to provide members and employees with individualized accommodations, whenever practical, to support success in their roles.

Employment

- Continue to ensure Board hiring practices promote diversity and inclusion.

Applicants and licensees

Information and communications

- Monitor the Board website and update content where necessary, according to the Board style guide, to ensure all content, services, and processes remain accessible.
- Apply a Gender Based Analysis plus (GBA+) lens to all external communications.
- Review the Board's accessibility feedback mechanism (web page) and decide what content needs to move to a new page(s) to speak explicitly to the general public about accessibility of Board services, as opposed to accessibility of the industry that the Board regulates.

General public; other ministries, agencies, and local governments
- Monitor the Board website and update content where necessary, according to the Board style guide, to ensure all content, services, and processes remain accessible.
- Apply a Gender Based Analysis plus (GBA+) lens to all external communications.
- Review the Board's accessibility feedback mechanism (web page) and decide what content needs to move to a new page(s) to speak explicitly to the general public about accessibility of Board services, as opposed to accessibility of the industry that the Board regulates.

Implementation approach

In the implementation of this accessibility plan, we will adopt the behaviours that are necessary to its success and to its continuous improvement.

Responsive: We will listen to feedback and incorporate it into our accessibility work and planning.

Collaborative: We will take direction from our accessibility committee in reviewing and improving our plan.

Progressive: We will continuously learn and adapt to new information that emerges around accessibility.

Respectful and fair: As we work to improve and ensure accessibility, we will honour principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

January 2024 to December 2026

- The Board will take actions to address the Priorities described above.
- We will review feedback and recommendations received from the accessibility committee and through our feedback mechanisms.
- Where necessary the Board will identify new priorities and determine related actions based on feedback and recommendations.

January 2027

- The Board will publish a final report on this three-year plan.
- The report will provide a final update and outline our future plans and priorities.

Accessibility Committee

The Accessible British Columbia Act requires prescribed organizations to establish an accessibility committee. The committee helps to identify accessibility barriers for individuals interacting with the organization, and it provides advice on removing and preventing barriers.

According to the Act, each organization's accessibility committee should, to the extent possible, follow the guidelines below:

- At least half of the committee members are persons with disabilities or individuals who support, or are from organizations that support, disabled people.
- These members should also reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in British Columbia.
- At least one committee member identifies as an Indigenous person.
- The committee as a whole broadly reflects the diversity of persons in British Columbia.

As the Board is a small organization, it is exploring opportunities to participate in a joint accessibility committee with other tribunals under the Ministry of Attorney General.

Conclusion

The Accessible British Columbia Act reinforces the government's commitment to promote accessibility for all British Columbians.

This accessibility plan identifies how the Passenger Transportation Board is supporting the government's priority of working towards a truly inclusive and accessible B.C. over the next three years.

We're committed to supporting the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in their communities. The Board looks forward to engaging with everyone it serves in the months and years ahead as we participate in the collective work of building a barrier-free B.C.

How to provide feedback

We welcome your thoughts on our accessibility plan and any barriers you have seen or experienced when interacting with us.

Visit this [online form](#) for options to provide feedback on this plan and on accessibility at the Passenger Transportation Board.

You can include photos and videos with your feedback.

All feedback will be summarized and shared with our accessibility committee and our leadership to inform our future accessibility planning.