



# AGE FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE AGENDA CITY OF MERRITT

Thursday, November 7, 2024

2:00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

2185 Voght Street

Merritt, B.C

Mission Statement: *The City of Merritt is a progressive, attractive, economically viable City that is socially responsible and environmentally sustainable.*

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

*We would like to begin this meeting by acknowledging that we are gathered on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Nlaka'pamux and Syilx people.*

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Age Friendly and Accessibility Committee Minutes - October 3, 2024

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**Recommendation:**

**THAT the Minutes of the Age Friendly and Accessibility Committee held on October 3, 2024 be adopted.**

3. GENERAL MATTERS - Delegations and Recognitions

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Age Friendly and Accessibility Tracker

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5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 BC Healthy Communities Plan H Healthy Communities Grant Announcement

5.2 Accessibility Plan Preliminary Information

13

6. TERMINATION OF MEETING



**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF MERRITT**  
**AGE FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY**  
**COMMITTEE**

Thursday, October 3, 2024  
2:00 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL  
2185 Voght Street  
Merritt, B.C

**PRESENT:**                    **Councillor W. Charney, Acting Chair**  
                                 **Ms. G. Bloom**  
                                 **Ms. S. Fischer**  
                                 **Mr. L. Gamache**  
                                 **Ms. J. Myram**

**ABSENT:**                    **Mayor M. Goetz**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**        **Ms. C. White, Chief Administrative Officer**  
                                 **Mr. R. Green, Director of Public Works and Engineering**  
                                 **Services**  
                                 **Ms. A. Legouf, Manager Community Services**  
                                 **Ms. A. Gush, Committee Clerk**

**1.     CALL TO ORDER**

Acting Chair Charney called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

**1.1    Land Acknowledgement**

*We would like to begin this meeting by acknowledging that we are gathered on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Nlaka'pamux and Syilx people.*

**2.     ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

## **2.1 Age Accessibility Committee Minutes - August 8, 2024**

The Committee amended the minutes as follows: Councillor Charney should be listed as being in attendance.

***THAT the Minutes of the Age Friendly and Accessibility Committee held on August 8, 2024 be adopted as amended.***

**Moved, Seconded, CARRIED**

## **3. GENERAL MATTERS - Delegations and Recognitions**

Nil.

## **4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **4.1 Sidewalk Inspection and Maintenance Procedure**

Mr. Rick Green spoke on sidewalk inspection and maintenance procedures noting that City staff work on a priority basis. Staff were directed to investigate transportation standards for the painting of sidewalk let downs.

The Committee spoke on concerns around snow removal within community, icy walkways were noted as areas of specific concern, specifically at the Central Park pathways. Discussions ensued around concept designs of pathways and items that are on the list to be completed. As more funding becomes available additional areas can be included.

### **4.2 Age Friendly and Accessibility Advisory Committee Workplan**

Ms. MacDonald noted that there are accessibility legislative requirements that must be met, she suggested that the workplan be reprioritized to meet these requirements. The Committee will review the action tracker and note which items have been completed and which areas require attention.

***THAT the Age Friendly and Accessibility Committee will meet monthly for the next three months.***

**Moved, Seconded, CARRIED**

## **5. NEW BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Age Friendly and Accessibility Action Tracker**

CAO White noted there will be funding news released soon that can be used to review and update the plan; however, it was noted that there is not enough funding to completely redo the plan. The CAO suggested working with a consultant to review and update the plan.

The Committee will review the tracker and submit updates to staff.

**6. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The Acting Chair declared the meeting ended at 2:48 pm.

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Mayor

Michael Goetz

Certified correct in accordance with Section 124(2) (c) of the Community Charter

Confirmed on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

AGE FRIENDLY AND ACCESSABILITY TRACKER

Item	Recommendation in Action plan	Action Taken	Status
5.1	5.1 Develop volunteer programs to combat social isolation of seniors - This is offered through the umbrella of services of Better at Home, the challenge has been with gathering volunteers who are interested in providing this service: <b>Staff promote Better at Home's search for volunteers through City media channels.</b>	<b>Oct 3, 2024:</b> Volunteers have been recruited. A new program will be rolling out in November regarding social isolation. Friendly telephone calls and visiting. Community coffee have been taking place, an increase in the new year. A goal once more volunteers acquired to include groceries.	<u>Oct 31, 2024 BAH update:</u> BAH now offers Friendly Phone Calls/Visits with seniors by way of volunteers (overseen by the program coordinator) – Current BAH coordinator has been recruiting volunteers, with 2 fully on-boarded & 3 additional waiting satisfactory CRC.
5.2	5.2 Reading Buddies - School district has a one-to-one reading program. The School Board could be encouraged to host an information session at Gillis house or Florentine to advise seniors what opportunities are available for volunteering:	Jana Heffernan to contact the School Board to ask if there a want or need for the City to assist in recruiting volunteers for this program through City media channels.	
5.4	5.4 Sharing local knowledge - the City library or museum could coordinate a speaker series for the fall or winter season. Ideas included video tape locals sharing their stories and create data base to be shared on social media.	Staff to speak with the NV Museum Coordinator to encourage development of such <b>a program</b>	<u>Oct 31, 2024 BAH Update:</u> BAH would be interest in partnering for hosting such events. Starting in December 2024, BAH will be hosting a Saturday Seniors' Social at ICS (on the first 3 Saturday's each month). There is space for knowledge sharing – in person & online.
5.6	5.6 After school work programs - Better at Home is implementing a program to provide grocery pick up for seniors. Meal prep and delivery is not a program that is being developed by Better at Home, the Committee inquired if NVIT catering students could provide meals for seniors.	The city list this as a possible future grant initiative. the Committee inquired if NVIT catering students could provide meals for seniors.	<u>Oct 31, 2024 BAH Update:</u> As the Friendly Phone Calls/ Visits program develops, the next plan is to investigate the need for & most efficient ay to develop a grocery shopping/delivery program, which would be largely done by volunteers. The Saturday Seniors' Social will be providing light lunch. There will be an option to eat at the event or take the food to go.

## AGE FRIENDLY AND ACCESSABILITY TRACKER

5.7	National Seniors Day - proclaim annually and cultural session by seniors association. Consider establishing a budget for 2022 for the Seniors Centre and Committee to organize an event and explore options for approaching other organizations to develop programs for specific events.	Bring forward to Council during the next grant in aid budget session.	<u>Oct 31, 2024 BAH Update:</u> BAH is interested in collaborating if events/community awareness take place.
5.8	Community garden in central business district - the City is exploring parklets and vertical gardens.		
26-Jul-21	Ms. Ava Dean brought forward information on Provincial services available for isolated seniors; the documents will be circulated to members to investigate which service options would benefit Merritt residents	The Committee suggested that the Men's Shed would be beneficial for elderly men who wish to continue power tool hobbies as they downsize their living arrangements.	
4.1	Ensure events are held in venues that adhere to accessibility standards.	Establishment of a Festival Society which includes a member of the Age Friendly & Accessibility Committee could bring an accessibility lens to the planning process.	
4.3	Partner with local professionals and students to develop senior based affordable social programs. Suggestions included:	Bring the First Nation population into to the process as they have valuable contributions that can be made. Opportunity to further expand some of the offerings in the recreation guides and provide the programs through City facilities led by other organizations to keep the costs down. Seniors centre needs upgrading to	

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		build on its current mandate, parking would also need to be addressed. Reach out to the fitness centres, Sikh community and Arts Council to provide programs to seniors.	
26-Jul-21	<b>CFDC/NV Chamber of Commerce be encouraged to organize a convention spotlighting public services to senior's fair at the Civic Centre.</b>		
4.4	4.4 Establish educational programs for service providers to learn more about geriatric care.	The Committee suggested this action item would dovetail well into the annual Health Fair.	
3.2	3.2 Promote the creation of new affordable housing units or innovative housing forms through incentives.		
3.4	3.4 Provide assistance for home renovation and adaptation through grants; There is a Federal program providing a grant for a home energy efficiency report and low-interest loans to complete identified adaptations. Tax incentives are available for the completion of adaptation renovations. The City will be implementing the STEP program later this year as a provincial requirement, the building bylaw will be dovetailed with this update.		
3.5	3.5 Create and distribute an Aging-In-Place checklist. Options will be presented at the next Committee meeting.		



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3.6	Promote the conversion of unoccupied space above shops into housing units. The Official Community Plan has created mixed-use zoning which addresses this action item.		
3.7	Incentivize the creation of mixed-use developments. The Tax Revitalization Policy can be revamped to target residential redevelopment.		
3.8	Consider partnerships with NVIT for affordable maintenance and renovation services. Better-at-Home programs include general maintenance such as painting or changing light bulbs on a volunteer basis. Ms. Dean volunteered to speak with NVIT to encourage the establishment of a program to provide general maintenance to seniors and the disabled in the City	<p><u>Oct 31, 2024:</u> Better at Homes does not have specific program for general maintenance. However, if a Friendly Visit is taking place and the senior requests assistance with something that the volunteer deems safe and is comfortable to support with, there is a possibility of support that way.</p> <p>It was noted that the provider of a service and a local association should be the two who partner on such a program; the City can apply for funding where other partners are not available to apply for the grant.</p> <p><b>Sep 27, 2021:</b> NVIT is willing to include community projects for seniors in the curriculum as they fit within the program, instructors make the final decision on the suitability of projects.</p>	<p><u>Oct 31, 2024:</u> BAH Program Coordinator is working on preparing a list of community resources &amp; businesses(including home -based) &amp; areas of expertise (ie: if a senior needs gutters cleaned) – to be able to refer seniors to call.</p>
1.3	Pedestrian crossings: An improvement program is in place to create more audible crossings and signals.	<p>May 31, 2021: Nicola Avenue Crosswalk timing was extended. Section 4.4 of the Merritt Active Transportation Plan: Review and update pedestrian crossing times at</p>	

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		intersections to provide adequate crossing time for all users. This includes reviewing signal phasing and considering the needs of all users, including those with reduced mobility.	
1.4	Cycling infrastructure	<p>The West Merritt Active Transportation Plan grant application has been submitted to the province for creation of a circular path in the City; when the route is finalized it will be brought forward to the Committee for review.</p> <p>Appendix D of the Merritt Active Transportation Plan: Action 1.3: Implement a complete and connected city-wide cycling network for people of all ages and abilities through a phased implementation approach.</p>	
1.5	Parks, pathways, and open space connections: Provide better access to open spaces and park areas, increase the park areas, and improve path networks.	Appendix D of the Merritt Active Transportation Plan: 1.2: Implement a complete and connected city-wide pedestrian network through a phased implementation approach.	
1.6	Intersection connections:	<p>Widen corner letdowns to improve alignment with crosswalks.</p> <p>Ensure that snowplows do not leave sidewalks and alleyway crossings blocked when clearing roads.</p> <p>Remove snow and ice in a timely and regular manner from letdowns</p>	
1.7	<p>Rest areas: create an inventory of street infrastructure and identify areas of deficiency.</p> <p>Promote a bench dedication program to increase seating infrastructure.</p>	<p>Consider incorporating seating in the proposed Active Transportation Plan section between Diamond Vale and the City centre.</p> <p>Increase the number of benches at bus stops.</p>	

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1.9	Branding: Develop an age-friendly branding package to identify businesses which have implemented age-friendly initiatives.	Research current initiatives in other communities, consider incentives for promotion such as GIS mapping, digital or physical stickers or business license discounts.	
1.10	Commercial/retail renovations:	<p>Research a cost-effective means of installing automatic door openers and possible grants for installation by businesses. This would be something that the City could help promote; installation and grant applications must be completed by businesses or building owners.</p> <p>Encourage outside seating areas as part of larger programs and incentives for businesses to get involved in improving accessibility.</p> <p>Create a pamphlet for businesses to highlight the benefits of creating accessible locations.</p> <p>Consider adopting a bylaw requiring building owners to install automatic door openers.</p>	
1.11	Promote commercial activity in the evenings: Initiative is in line with economic initiatives for open and accessible businesses. Council is reviewing the OCP to facilitate mixed use in the downtown core which would assist in revitalizing the downtown core area.	During COVID local restaurants were encouraged to build on street patio spaces in parking spots.	
08-Feb-21	Elder abuse and senior's advocacy on reserve land; and,		

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1.1	Implement a voluntary snow removal program (i.e. Snow Angels) as incentive for able-bodied residents to help others in clearing snow.	Program operated for two years with paid contractor, has now ceased due to lack of funds. Investigation in 2024 for implementation of volunteer program was not well received.	
	Recognition of the isolation being experienced by seniors in ethnic communities.		
Completed			
27-Sep-21	Public Service Directory	The local news paper already runs one	
5.3	5.3 Locate child minding facilities within seniors facilities -	the Committee determined it was best left to facility coordinators to determine the individual needs of facilities.	
5.5	5.5 Increase participation of aging residents on committees;	the Committee determined this has been accomplished through the establishment of the Age Friendly and Accessibility Committee.	
26-Jul-21	<b>ACTION:</b> Set up a template to develop the scope of projects.		
3.1	3.1 Lobby for subsidized assisted living in Merritt.	BC Housing has partnered with Merritt in this process, there have been successes, and a variety of options will be coming forward in the future	
29-Mar-21	Accessible Taxi Service	Program Merritt does not have a HandyDART service but does have an OnDemand system.	

## Accessibility Requirements

- **Employment** (hiring, workplace standards, etc.)
- **Service delivery** (getting goods, services, or programs)
- **Built environment** (buildings, places, and spaces)
- **Information and communications** (human communication such as the way people interact and communicate in the way that works for them, and technical communication such as websites and documents)
- **Transportation** (buses, ferries, trains, etc.)
- **Education** (early childhood education)
- **Procurement** (buying services)

1. Need a committee
2. Seek community input
3. Draft a plan
4. Implement a feedback tool

## City of Merritt 2020 Accessibility Standards

### Built Environment

This guide outlines when buildings and occupancies must be accessible to persons with disabilities, and provides a number of illustrations as examples of the British Columbia Building Code 2018 (BCBC) requirements. This guide does not include an exhaustive list but is meant to highlight typical requirements. The BCBC Section 3.8 should be consulted for details and requirements for specific occupancies and situations.

### 2016 AF plan that relate to Accessibility:

#### Transportation:

Sidewalks, pathways and pedestrian crossings will be safe and accessible for all residents: The community identified areas within the city that impeded mobility (i.e. pedestrian crossings along Nicola Avenue).

Aging residents can easily access programs and services both locally and regionally using safe and reliable transportation options: The community identified difficulties when using public transportation (i.e. limited regional service).

#### **Kamloops Plan**

**Develop and deliver an awareness campaign for snow removal contractors about the importance of snow removal in commercial areas, at pedestrian intersections and in accessible parker areas**

**Include accessibility considerations in transportation master plans and OCP through consultation with community and accessibility committee**

**Upgrade traffic signals with audible signals**

## Research feasibility of pilot community support driver program

### Vernon Plan

Enhance walkability and rollability – Do an audit ([Study Details - SWAN - Simon Fraser University \(sfu.ca\)](#)).

Enhance walkability by working towards a linked multi-use trail and pathway system connecting the City Centre to neighborhoods, parks and other community recreational amenities

Ensure multi-use paths are graded, paved and where needed separated from higher speed users, so they are accessible to people of all abilities, including seniors and people living with dementia

Ensure that crosswalks are regularly maintained and visible 24 hours/day

Ensure wide, paved, low grade, continuous and accessible looped walking paths in major parks suitable for wheelchairs, walkers, and individuals with mobility needs

Prioritize managing snow and ice in key areas where seniors need access. Increasing snow clearing in commercial areas, bus stops and from sidewalks to plowed street level. Improve sidewalk and ramp maintenance

### Built Environment

Local businesses respect aging residents and accommodate for their distinct needs: There are many existing buildings that do not meet accessibility standards (i.e. push-butt on accesses).

Residents of all ages will have access to affordable and diverse housing options: The community identified a need for more housing options as they age (i.e. seniors' specific housing facilities).

Home maintenance services and renovation options are affordable and available to aging residents: The community expressed the desire to better age in place (i.e. home modification services).

### Kamloops Plan suggestions:

Seek grant opportunities annually to upgrade municipal buildings for accessibility

\*Federal and Provincial accessibility grants, Rick Hansen Grants

-Ensure staff are using existing guidelines when doing renovations/retrofits/upgrades/new builds to municipal buildings/assets

\*BC Building Code, Rick Hansen Design Guide, BC Accessibility Handbook

\*Aim for [Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification](#) (60-79% level) for all new municipal facilities

-Assess current state (accessibility audit) to identify future improvements

-Consult with the Accessibility groups and persons with disabilities on new construction/renovation projects.

Notify the public and prioritize remediation when there are disruptions to community assets that would impact accessibility (eg. Sidewalk closures)

Review and address, when possible, the challenges faced by persons with disabilities living in a winter city.

Compile information and keep it updated about accessible infrastructure in parks, pub facilities, ped crossings for publication on the City website, and for distribution. Make it available in pdf format for screen readers or text breakdown.

Ensure funding for accessibility requirements/improvements is included in business cases for projects.

#### Vernon Plan

Prioritize accessibility in the design of public spaces

Improve signage in public parks and buildings with clear maps, symbols and landmarks to help with wayfinding and navigation. Place signage at lower levels so that people who use mobility aids can see them more easily

increase the number of accessible, clean and safe public washrooms

Encourage and incentivize the inclusion of studio and 1 bedroom units in subsidized and market rental housing projects, including those designated for older adults

Encourage and incentivize the inclusion of accessible and/or adaptable housing units in rental housing projects

Ensure that an adequate supply of land, especially near amenities, parks, and transportation is available and designated to meet the anticipated need for seniors supportive housing in the community

#### Service Delivery:

Local events and activities will be affordable and accessible to all residents: This will help individuals that are unable to participate in community activities due to financial stress or inaccessible venue locations (i.e. lack of voluntary transportation services).

Intergenerational programming will be encouraged and promoted: The community welcomes increased opportunity for more integration and interaction between residents of all ages.

Aging residents have access to adequate community services, programs and healthcare: The community identified a need for more information regarding services available to them as well as access to existing services (i.e. increased regional transportation services).

#### Kamloops Plan suggestions:

Promote accessible programs to the public

Increase representation of people with disabilities in community/publicity material

Review and incorporate accommodations for person with disability into customer services practices: eg. Provide training to public-facing staff to improve customer service around accessibility and best practices when serving persons with disabilities (e.g. working with clients who have guide dogs).

#### Vernon Plan

Increase awareness of housing resources and services that can help people age in the community, such as rent subsidies for low income seniors, e.g. BC Housing's Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER)

Design programs and services for older adults that are culturally relevant, accessible, available and inclusive of people with diverse abilities and people living with dementia. Whenever possible, offer a continuum of programs for older adults that will serve them well as they progress through various stages of aging and/or dementia where applicable

Ensure that emergency preparedness and climate resilience plans, programs and initiatives consider the special needs of seniors and people living with disabilities

#### Communication and Information Sharing:

The City of Merritt will provide clear and transparent information to aging residents of the community: Aging residents were unaware of some community services and seniors-specific programming available to them.

#### Kamloops Plan

Build a process to ensure accessibility practices are incorporated into social media operations.

#### Vernon Plan

Improve the City website for older adult users and those with accessibility needs, including simplified navigation, and a more user friendly mobile interface

Ensure that public consultation opportunities consider the needs of older adults and people living with dementia. Where possible, prioritize face-to-face engagement through workshops and open houses.

Ensure that City messaging is inclusive and representative of community members from all walks of life, including older adults and people living with dementia. Project positive, diverse and respectful representations of older adults in all creative and written material. Wherever possible, promote imagery that shows intergenerational connections between seniors and other age categories. Wherever possible, encourage images that show diversity and challenge stereotypes about older adults and people with disabilities.

#### Employment:

Aging residents will have the opportunity to obtain meaningful employment: There are many aging residents that would like to continue to work but are unable to find employment options that fit with their post-retirement lifestyle (i.e. flexible part-time employment).



## Kamloops Plan

Hiring processes should be inclusive: identify barriers in recruitment and remove to the greatest extent possible; explore accessibility partnerships to see where there are opportunities for meaningful work to be integrated through the organization.

Establish an employee resource group for employees with disabilities

### Education:

Learning opportunities will be available to all residents: Aging residents would like to have access to a wider variety of educational programming (i.e. computer literacy programs).

### Accountability/Evaluation:

#### Kamloops Plan

Develop an evaluation matrix to monitor progress and measure success (annual report to council?)

Provide updates to the Accessibility Committee

Increase options to receive comments from the public on barriers to individuals within or interacting with the City of Kamloops organization. (ongoing input mechanism).

Identify departments accountable for any action items, including implementation and reporting

\*Consider broad goals with objectives and action items

## Vernon Plan

### Indicators for annual evaluation:

Accessibility improvements to existing City spaces, buildings and transportation infrastructure  
New City-owned spaces, buildings and transportation infrastructure with accessibility features

# age friendly representatives on Council Committees & Working Groups

# new City plans and policies or plan updates reflecting Age friendly and accessibility goals

# new City recreational programs for seniors and people with disabilities, including special events hosted or supported by the City

New residential housing projects for seniors

# approved subsidized housing units designated for older adults, accessible units and adaptable units

# approved accessible and/or adaptable rental housing units