



## COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

### Accessibility Advisory Committee

#### Terms of Reference

#### PURPOSE

The Accessibility Committee (AC) is an advisory committee of the Board created further to the *Accessible British Columbia Act*. In September 2022, new regulations were implemented by the Government of British Columbia which require local governments to establish an AC with the purpose of developing an accessibility plan ("the Plan") and a tool to receive feedback on accessibility by September 2023. The AC is also responsible to review and update the Plan at least once every three years.

- (1) An accessibility plan should outline how the organization will identify, remove and prevent barriers to people in the organization or interacting with it. The plan must be reviewed and updated at least once every three years.

In developing or updating its plan, an organization must consult with its Accessibility Committee and consider these specified principles:

- Inclusion
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- Collaboration
- Self-determination
- Universal design

In updating its plan, an organization must also consider comments received through its public feedback mechanism.

- (2) A tool to receive feedback on accessibility will need to be developed via the Accessibility Committee.

The Accessibility Committee will:

- Ensure the public is notified about the time and location of Accessibility Committee meetings;
- Provide input and advice to the Board on the best methods to engage the public and stakeholders;
- Identify barriers of access to Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) services and programs that could be referred to the Committee that may benefit from their feedback and advice;
- Raise awareness about accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities; and
- Be a resource to the CVRD on matters relating to accessibility and participate in community engagement activities
- Ensure the accessibility plan and community engagement are neutral, balanced and inclusive;
- Ensure that adequate information is provided to community members to enable them to provide informed feedback;
- Participate in community engagement activities;
- Remain objective and unbiased while overseeing the process of the community education and participation in the accessibility plan, and avoid reflecting preferred outcomes;

- Provide timely comments and advice on informational and educational materials, consultation synopsis and report recommendations, based on member knowledge and expertise.
- Receive the draft final plan [which may be developed by a Consultant], which will provide the findings and outcomes from public and stakeholder engagement processes, to review for completeness and provide suggestions and feedback.
- The Accessibility Committee may make recommendations to the CVRD Board, based on a summary of the public feedback, the content of the final report and the Accessibility Committee's work with the Consultant, if consulting services are used.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Accessibility Committee will have 7-11 members. The composition of the Accessibility Committee will be broadly representative of the various backgrounds and interests in the area of accessibility for persons with disabilities. Preference will be given to members who live in the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

The Accessibility Committee, to the extent possible, should have at least half of its members:

- Be persons with disabilities
- Represent a disability-serving organization

Membership should also reflect the diversity of British Columbians and have Indigenous representation. Committees may include members from inside or outside of the organization.

The Accessibility Committee is an advisory committee and will be appointed by the CVRD Board in accordance with the CVRD Procedure Bylaw and CVRD practices.

Members will be selected through a publicly advertised call for members and appointed by the CVRD Board.

Membership on the Accessibility Committee will be for a three-year term, concluding at the end of each three-year review period as per the requirements of the Accessible BC Act. Membership is voluntary and there will be no remuneration for participation. Members can be reappointed for consecutive terms as approved by the CVRD Board.

## **ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE MEETING PROTOCOLS**

Accessibility Committee meetings are open to the public.

A schedule of meetings will be determined by the Accessibility Committee.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair and Vice-Chair will be Directors of the CVRD.

Meetings will be run by the Chair, or the Vice-Chair in the Chair's absence.

A quorum of the Accessibility Committee will be comprised of not less than half of appointed Accessibility Committee members.



Minutes of Accessibility Committee meetings will be taken by CVRD staff.

Accessibility Committee meetings will adhere to procedures outlined in the current CVRD Procedure Bylaw, and its amendments.

All Accessibility Committee members are equal and have equal opportunity to contribute at meetings, as well as responsibility to respect the opinions of others. At least two members of the AC will be CVRD Board Members.

Committee members should see themselves as advisors, not decision-makers, and therefore favour consensus where possible as the method of moving the development or review of the accessibility plan forward. The Committee has no financial or contractual authority.

Expression of personal opinions, including on social media platforms, should not detract from the ability of the Accessibility Committee to function as a transparent, neutral conduit for information to the community about the accessibility plan.

#### **COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

All Accessibility Committee meetings and public engagement activities relating to the development of the accessibility plan will operate in compliance with provincial COVID-19 public health orders and CVRD safety protocols.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Accessibility Committee members will respect the confidentiality of community members who share information with them, including any information deemed “personal” as defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

#### **REMOVAL OF COMMITTEE MEMBER**

The Committee Chair or CVRD staff may recommend to the Board that an appointed member of the Accessibility Committee be removed if the member undermines the functionality of the Accessibility Committee or disregards the Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference. Members of the Committee are subject to the behavior standards in the Code of Conduct for Elected Officials.

#### **ROLE OF CVRD STAFF**

CVRD staff will assist with meeting logistics, attend Accessibility Committee meetings in an observational role, take minutes, and act as a resource to the Accessibility Committee as needed.



## **AMENDMENTS TO TERMS OF REFERENCE**

These Terms of Reference may be amended by the CVRD Board.

Adopted by the Board of Directors July 12, 2023