



Accessibility Framework and Action Plan
February 2024

Castlegar Sculpturewalk Accessibility Framework and Action Plan

This policy document aims to articulate and codify Castlegar Sculpturewalk's key accessibility principles and practices.

Castlegar Sculpturewalk has developed an accessibility framework founded on inclusivity across physical, digital, and programmatic realms. Our commitment will begin with a comprehensive accessibility audit, evaluating all spaces and platforms to identify barriers. We will prioritize physical modifications, ensuring our art installations and event venues are as universally accessible as possible with ramps, clear signage, and dedicated parking. We will examine our digital presence, and hope to align our website with WCAG guidelines, offering an inclusive online experience through alt text, keyboard navigation, and downloadable materials in accessible formats. Our programs and events are designed to accommodate diverse needs, providing sign language interpreters, closed captioning and other resources. Through continuous staff training and community engagement, we cultivate a culture of understanding and responsiveness, ensuring that Castlegar Sculpturewalk is an inviting space for all, fostering an environment where art can be appreciated by everyone, regardless of ability.

Introduction

Sculpturewalk is an outdoor exhibit of original sculptures by local and international artists, located on a pleasant walking tour in downtown Castlegar. Viewers are encouraged to vote for their favourite sculpture via ballot, and the winner of The People's Choice Award is purchased for permanent display in the City. Sculpturewalk attracts world-class sculptural talent to our program which has resulted in Castlegar being trademarked the "Sculpture Capital of Canada".

Castlegar, nestled in a rural setting, values accessibility within our programming. At Sculpturewalk, fostering a culture of inclusivity is paramount, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background or ability, feel welcomed and accommodated. We celebrate diversity in Castlegar, and hope to provide individuals with disabilities, those living with mental illness, the Deaf and hard of hearing community with programming that supports and reflects their experiences. By embracing this diverse spectrum, we endeavor to create accessible environments that honor and respect the unique needs of every member of our community, affirming their valued place within the artistic landscape Sculpturewalk cultivates in Castlegar.

Definitions

What is accessibility?

Accessibility is the work we do to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in society on an equal basis with others.

Accessibility seeks to improve access by changing the way we design buildings, policies, programs, as well as the assumptions and attitudes we hold, to improve opportunities for equal participation.

Who is the primary focus for this framework?

Persons with disabilities/Disabled people and persons living with mental illness include individuals with physical, psychosocial or learning disabilities that may be long-term, temporary or fluctuating and may or may not be apparent. Deaf persons, which includes individuals who are culturally-Deaf, deaf, or have hearing loss, as well as those who identify as hard-of-hearing, oral-deaf, deaf-blind or late-deafened.[2]

A note about Language:

In this Accessibility Plan, we acknowledge the evolving nature of language used to describe disability and disability communities, mirroring the evolving societal landscape. Understanding that language preferences differ among communities and individuals, we strive to respect this diversity. As a gesture of inclusivity, we interchangeably use both “person-first” and “identity-first” language, employing both “people with disabilities” and “disabled people” throughout this plan. While this alternation aligns with best practices, we recognize the importance of individual preferences. When communicating with someone, we encourage inquiring about their personal preference as the most respectful approach.

[2] Note that Castlegar Sculpturewalk subscribes to the social model of disability, which views disability as a consequence of environmental, social and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society, as opposed to the medical model of disability that focuses on an individual person’s so-called physical or mental limitations. (Adapted from the Public Service Alliance of Canada’s definitions of models of disability.)

Example Accessibility Action Plan

The actions outlined in this plan cannot dismantle the historical accessibility issues within our society, however, the plan can and will address steps we are committed to taking as an institution to become a more accessible place.

Becoming a more accessible organization will be an ongoing process. We will endeavor to work continuously to eliminate barriers and to embed access in all we do. We stand behind this document as a collective vision for action. It will evolve and develop as we work toward accomplishing our goals together across every level of our organization. Our commitment to accessibility as an arts organization will remain unwavering throughout.

Based on the contents of this action plan, we as an organization commit to the following vision of success:

- Providing accessible events for attendees
- Ensuring artists' accessibility needs are met
- Support from the board of directors and senior leadership to realize these plans, including the necessary allocation of resources and prioritization of fundraising efforts
- Regular progress reports to the board and staff to ensure transparency, accountability, and collective feedback

In order to accomplish these goals, our plan enumerates actions and priorities that will be pursued in the following areas:

1. Culture and Policy Development
2. Digital, Physical and Event Accessibility

IMPLEMENTATION

Culture and Policy Development:

As Castlegar Sculpturewalk embarks on its accessibility journey, our commitment to inclusivity is foundational. We recognize the importance of establishing a culture where accessibility is integral to our identity. Through dedicated policy development and ongoing learning, we aim to lay the groundwork for a welcoming and barrier-free environment that celebrates diversity. Our initial focus on foundational culture and policy development marks the beginning of our journey towards creating an inclusive space where art can be enjoyed by all.

Key Outcomes	Activity Commences
<p>Develop an accessibility audit of all events provided by Castlegar Sculpturewalk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct a thorough audit of physical spaces, digital platforms, and programs to identify barriers	In Progress
<p>Provide accessibility competency training for all staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource trainings through Kickstart Disability and other entities that provide accessible trainings	In Progress
<p>Develop policies and procedures to support accessibility initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a comprehensive accessibility policy that aligns with local regulations and best practices• Ensure policy is publicly accessible and communicates commitment to inclusivity	In Progress
<p>Develop feedback mechanisms for participants in Sculpturewalk’s programming</p>	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish channels for receiving feedback on accessibility from visitors and incorporate suggestions for improvement• Periodically reassess and update the accessibility plan to address evolving needs and language | |
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Digital, Physical and Event Accessibility:

As Castlegar Sculpturewalk begins its quest for accessibility, our primary aim is to set up essential measures that prioritize inclusivity. We're dedicated to creating physical spaces that cater to everyone, ensuring ease of access across pathways and installations. Concurrently, our digital evolution is focused on fostering online inclusivity, aiming for a website that complies with accessibility guidelines. These initial strides underscore our unwavering commitment to crafting an environment where both physical and digital realms welcome and accommodate diverse individuals equally.

Key Outcomes	Activity Commences
<p>Ensure that locations for sculptures are accessible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that pathways around sculptures are barrier free• Make every attempt to place sculptures in locations that are accessible or viewable by public transportation• Discuss modifications that the city may be able to make to ensure that the sculptures are accessible (curb ramps/curb cuts etc)	In Progress
<p>Provide accessibility competency training for all staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resource trainings through Kickstart Disability and other entities that provide accessible trainings	In Progress
<p>Develop policies and procedures to support accessibility initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a comprehensive accessibility policy that aligns with local regulations and best practices	In Progress

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure policy is publicly accessible and communicates commitment to inclusivity 	
<p>Develop feedback mechanisms for participants in Sculpturewalk’s programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish channels for receiving feedback on accessibility from visitors and incorporate suggestions for improvement • Periodically reassess and update the accessibility plan to address evolving needs and language 	<p>In Progress</p>
<p>Ensure all Sculpturewalk events are accessible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make events and workshops inclusive by offering sign language interpreters, closed captioning (online), and accessible seating • Provide multiple ways for individuals to contact and interact with the organization, including TTY/TTD phone services and email. 	<p>In Progress</p>

DRAFT Accessibility Policy

Castlegar Sculpturewalk is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment, recognizing the importance of accessibility for all individuals to engage with our artistic offerings. While acknowledging our past oversight, we are committed to rectifying this and prioritizing accessibility moving forward.

1. Commitment to Change: Castlegar Sculpturewalk acknowledges the previous lack of focus on accessibility. We commit ourselves to proactive measures that ensure inclusivity in all our present and future endeavors.

2. Building Accessibility: Recognizing the need for change, we are embarking on a journey to retrofit physical spaces (including outdoor spaces) to ensure they are accessible to all individuals. This includes conducting audits and making necessary modifications to our venues and art installations.

3. Digital Inclusivity: Our website and digital platforms will undergo transformation to comply with accessibility standards. We aim to provide an online experience that caters to diverse needs, making our content accessible to everyone.

4. Ongoing Commitment: Castlegar Sculpturewalk pledges to continuously educate ourselves on accessibility matters and implement necessary changes. Regular audits and community engagement will guide our ongoing efforts to ensure inclusivity.

5. Community Engagement: We invite feedback and collaboration from our community to inform our accessibility initiatives. This collaborative approach will help us better understand and address diverse accessibility needs.

This policy signifies a new chapter for Castlegar Sculpturewalk, where our commitment to accessibility is earnest and ongoing. While recognizing past shortcomings, we are dedicated to creating an environment where art is accessible and enjoyed by everyone, regardless of ability.