



Mobility/ Accessibility Master Plan

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CITY OF LETHBRIDGE | JULY 2020



CITY OF
Lethbridge

City of Lethbridge Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan

JULY 2020

PREPARED IN COLLABORATION BY:



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. WHY IS ACCESSIBILITY IMPORTANT?	11
2. HOW DID WE GET HERE?	17
2.1 Research.....	19
2.2 Community Engagement	20
2.3 Business Unit Engagement.....	22
3. WHAT ARE WE AIMING FOR?	25
3.1 Best Practices: Universal Design Principles.....	26
3.2 The 7 Principles of Universal Design	28
4. WHERE ARE WE RIGHT NOW?	33
4.1 Policy Direction.....	34
5. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES	39
6. PLAN VISION & GOALS	43
6.1 Vision.....	44
6.2 Goals	44
7. CITY RESPONSIBILITIES & COMMITMENTS TO ACCESSIBILITY	47
7.1 Clarify Roles & Responsibilities.....	48
7.2 Key Actions.....	49
7.3 Lead Teams.....	49
7.4 Time Frame.....	49
8. INCREASE BUSINESS UNIT COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION	53
8.1 Key Actions.....	55
8.2 Lead Teams.....	55
8.3 Time Frame.....	55
9. BUILD EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS	57
9.1 Key Actions.....	60
9.2 Lead Teams.....	60
9.3 Time Frame.....	60
10. AREAS OF FOCUS	63
11. TOOLS & TECHNIQUES	99
12. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	105
12.1 Capital Budget.....	106
12.2 Operating Budget.....	106
12.3 Financing Tools	107
12.4 Key Actions.....	110
12.5 Lead Team.....	110
12.6 Time Frame.....	110
13. IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING	113

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP) is a long-term visionary plan to create a universally accessible city that is designed for all people, regardless of ability, where everyone can meaningfully contribute to, and engage with, their community. We all know someone that could benefit from greater accessibility: a parent pushing a stroller up a curb, a friend with vision loss crossing the street, a grandparent with hearing loss trying to use a service at the library, or a young athlete using crutches while healing from an injury. In fact, we are all Temporarily Able Bodied (TAB) and at some point in our lives are likely to need mobility support. The Conference Board of Canada predicts that the number of Canadians living with a physical disability that impairs their mobility, vision, or hearing will rise from 2.9 million to 3.6 million over the next 13 years, nearly double the pace of the population as a whole.

Unfortunately, many of our public spaces and buildings and businesses are not accessible. Significant effort is required to create a physical environment that is simple and intuitive to use, requires low physical effort and is designed to accommodate a wide range of users. True accessibility involves fostering a sense of inclusion so people of all abilities can flourish. We all benefit when our communities enable everyone to play a part. The Conference Board of Canada estimates that improvements to workplace access would allow 550,000 Canadians with disabilities to work more, increasing personal value and GDP by \$16.8 billion by 2030.

Every project considers accessibility, and every action the City takes is an opportunity to make a difference in the life of someone facing a challenge — ***now and in the future.***

The City undertook a comprehensive planning process that included best practices research with other municipalities focused on improving accessibility in their communities, significant stakeholder and public engagement with Lethbridge residents with lived experience and supporting local organizations as well as direct interviews with City Business Units to better understand actions taken and future plans for accessibility improvements in their areas of focus. Through this process several opportunities and challenges emerged related to ongoing public education around the principles of universal design, increasing collaboration between Business Units, creating partnerships with external agencies, establishing a clear mandate for accessibility and the realities of navigating the city in winter.



With a broader understanding of the issues and opportunities both locally and elsewhere, the City established the following vision for the MAMP:

The City of Lethbridge is a place where people of all ages and abilities can participate in the community. The Master Plan will guide the optimization of our physical infrastructure to allow for equal access to programs and services for ALL people, including those with physical, sensory and cognitive challenges.

The realization of this vision will require leadership from the City of Lethbridge to:

- Ensure universal design becomes an overarching theme;
- Determine annual and ongoing funding to advance accessibility goals;
- Implement and monitor actions; and to
- Review the MAMP regularly to ensure it remains a relevant living document.





To this end the City will continue to empower the Mobility/Accessibility Working Group (MAWG), made up of representatives from several City Business Units, to advance the objectives of the MAMP and to share progress with City Administration and the broader community. In addition, the MAWG will be specifically responsible for increasing communication and collaboration with City Business Units and building external partnerships with local agencies, institutions and the development community to increase awareness and understanding, identify opportunities and to explore potential partnerships to advance common accessibility goals in Lethbridge.





Based on the feedback received through the Business Unit assessments and stakeholder and public engagement, 13 Areas of Focus emerged as tangible initiatives to significantly improve accessibility for everyone in Lethbridge.

- A. Seek Sustainable Funding for Facility Retrofits
- B. Ensure City Assets are Accessible for All Abilities
- C. Assess Current Conditions (Accessibility Audits)
- D. Enhance External Communication & Engagement
- E. Develop Consistent Mobility/Accessibility Guidelines & Standards
- F. Test Design Ideas Unique to Lethbridge
- G. Prioritize Planned Mobility & Accessibility Improvements
- H. Collaborate to Minimize Winter City Challenges
- I. Maintain Accessibility During Construction Detours
- J. Ensure a Seamless Interface between Public & Private Spaces
- K. Explore an Accessible Door-to-Door Transportation Service
- L. Manage Access-A-Ride Demand
- M. Monitor and Enforce Mobility/Accessibility Regulations

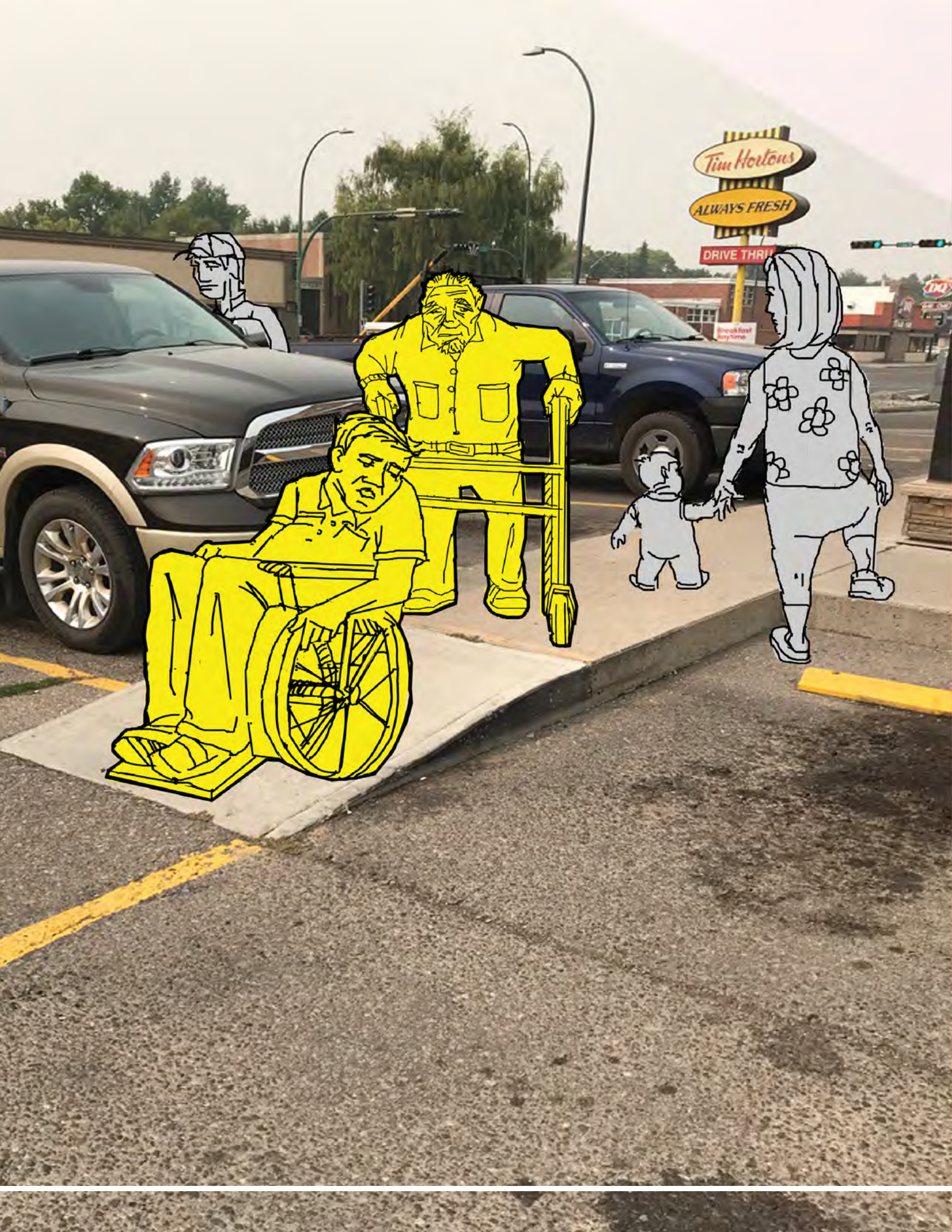
Each Area of Focus includes objectives, considerations, Business Unit actions, collaboration partners, anticipated timeframe and financial considerations.

The City of Lethbridge has access to a number of relevant tools and techniques to assist in implementing the MAMP. From reinforcing the significance of accessibility through relevant policy documents including the Municipal Development Plan and local Area Structure Plans, to articulating detailed design expectations through Subdivision and Design Standards, the City can achieve improved accessibility across the community.

The City of Lethbridge is also responsible for the efficient and cost-effective delivery of services and programs to meet the diverse needs of its residents. Several innovative financial vehicles are available to the City to help fund capital improvements and support ongoing operational costs including a community revitalization levy, accessibility grants, and social impact bonds. These financial tools should be further explored, with interested partners, in order to advance the City's accessibility aspirations.

The MAMP has been successful in raising awareness about the importance of improving mobility and accessibility for all residents of Lethbridge; has facilitated connections between the City and residents with lived experience and various supporting agencies; and has identified 13 specific Areas of Focus to achieve real impact in the community. The Plan's ultimate success will be measured on its ability to be implemented. To this end, the final section in the document summarizes the necessary actions, anticipated timing, responsible lead group and potential partners required to support the ongoing implementation and monitoring necessary to achieve lasting accessibility improvements for the benefit of all Lethbridge residents and visitors.







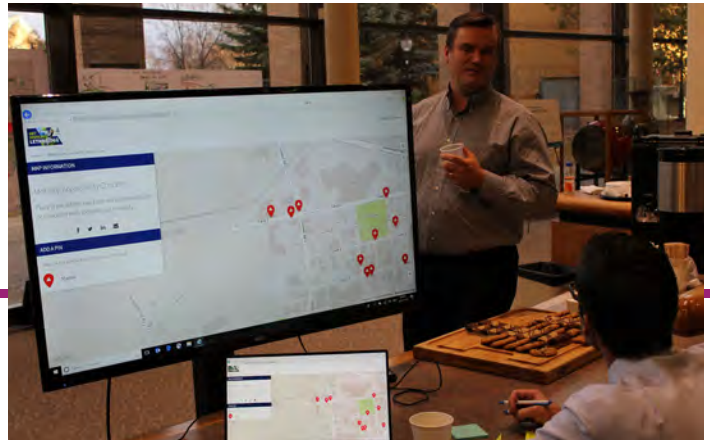
1. WHY IS ACCESSIBILITY IMPORTANT?

The Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP) is a visionary plan, created to guide the City of Lethbridge on a path towards universal accessibility. The principal outcome will be a city that is designed and operated for all people, regardless of their level of ability, where everyone will be able to meaningfully contribute to, and engage with, their surroundings. The costs to our communities are immense when people are excluded, including higher social and health care costs and lost potential for organizations and our economy. Our city misses out on what everyone can contribute when we don't prioritize accessibility.

“

Including every citizen in society isn't a 'nice to have' — it's the hallmark of a great society. Great societies become greater when everyone has equal access, is fully engaged, and can realize their potential.

– Rick Hansen, Founder Rick Hansen Foundation



We all know someone that could benefit from greater accessibility: a parent pushing a stroller up a curb, a friend with vision loss crossing the street or a grandparent with hearing loss trying to use a service at the library. According to Statistics Canada data from 2017, 22% of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over – or about 6.2 million individuals – had one or more disabilities. In fact, we are all Temporarily Able Bodied (TAB) and at some point in our lives we are likely to need support in our city to help us continue to contribute and enjoy our community, particularly as we get older. A Statistics Canada profile showed that the prevalence of disability increased with age, from 13% for those aged 15 to 24 years to 47% for those aged 75 years and over. Not only are disabilities more prevalent with older age, but the Conference Board of Canada predicts that the number of Canadians living with a physical disability that impairs their mobility, vision, or hearing will rise from 2.9 million to 3.6 million over the next 13 years, nearly double the pace of the population as a whole.



Many of our public places and buildings in Canada are not accessible. Building codes differ in every province and the standards don't always ensure that our spaces are meaningfully accessible for all. Almost 50% of Canadians know someone who has a physical disability, not to mention the proportion of Canadians that know someone with another type of disability. True accessibility is more than just a legal standard or specification—it involves fostering a sense of inclusion so people with disabilities can flourish. We all benefit when our communities enable everyone to play a part and share their abilities. As an example, the Conference Board of Canada estimates that improvements to workplace access would allow 550,000 Canadians with disabilities to work more, increasing GDP by \$16.8 billion by 2030.

The purpose of the MAMP is to lay out the principles of why action is needed now and what steps we can all take to make life easier for everyone- of all ages, abilities, and circumstances. This vision is not one that can be achieved overnight, and it will take the hard work of many people and organizations. The purpose of the MAMP cannot be championed by one person, group, or team alone; it must mean that every project considers accessibility, and that every action the City takes is an opportunity to make a difference in the life of someone facing a challenge- now and in the future.



The purpose of the MAMP cannot be championed by one person, group, or team alone; it must mean that *every project considers accessibility*, and that *every action* the City takes *is an opportunity to make a difference in the life of someone facing a challenge – now and in the future.*

While visionary in nature, the MAMP is intended to be a City-wide document that provides strategies and recommendations to guide new development, redevelopment and other City initiatives toward equitable access of the physical environment. This Plan will provide the City with a tool to guide decision-making, investment, resource allocation and energy over the next twenty years. As a long-term strategy, the MAMP will help the City employ a more deliberate, strategic and proactive approach to mobility and accessibility improvements.

The MAMP document is intended to be used by all: internal City Business Units, all residents living with or without a disability, developers, and community organizations and advocates. However, the City recognizes its role in this undertaking, and is committed to leading and supporting partners along the way. The City understands that the opportunities and challenges associated with accessibility and mobility are complicated and can influence and be influenced by the broader objectives of the City. The motivation for undertaking this project is to ensure that the City provides a physical environment that can be accessed by all and that people of all abilities have the opportunity to participate in and uniquely contribute to the health and vibrancy of the community.

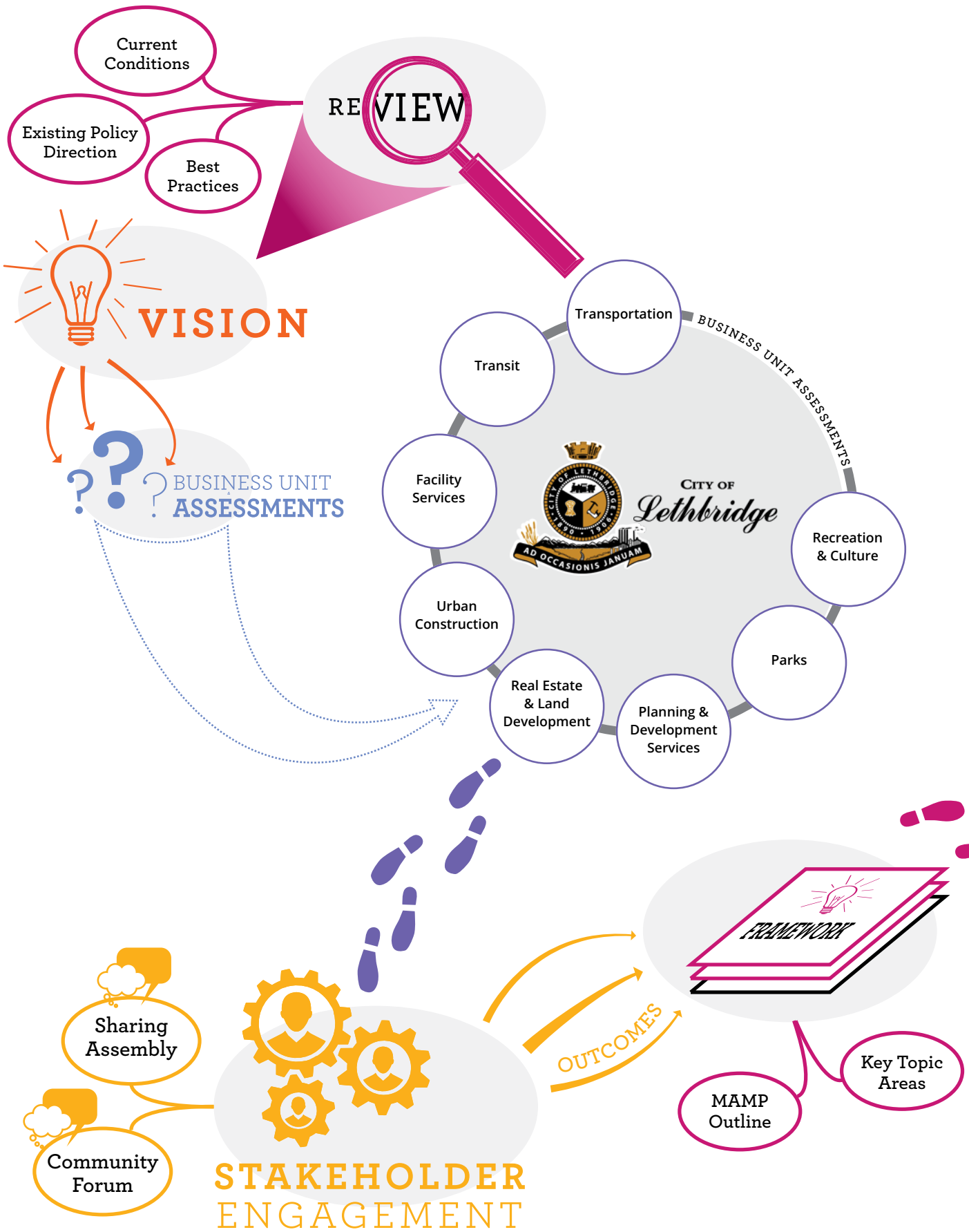




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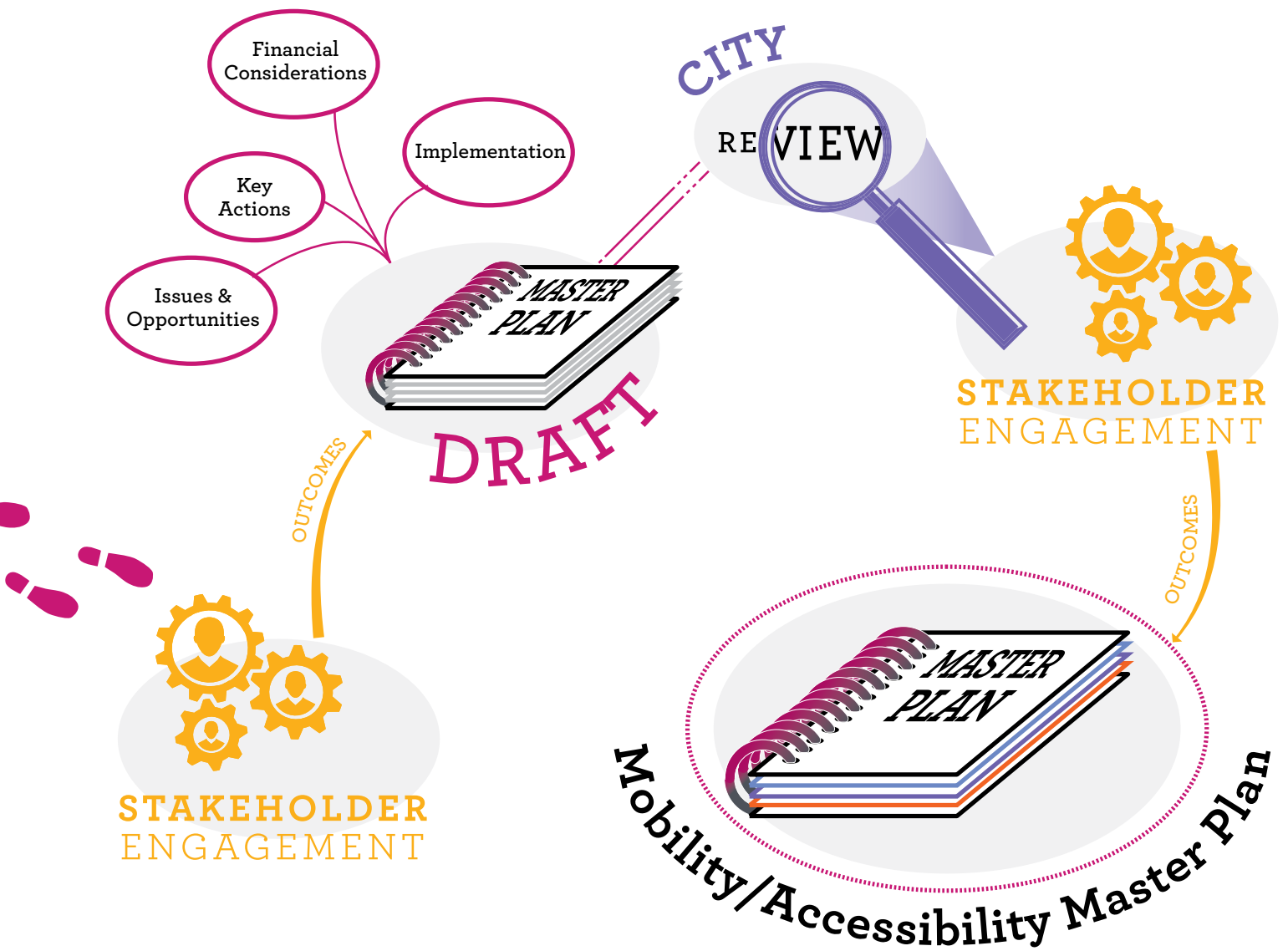
HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The City of Lethbridge has been active implementing accessibility improvements in the city for a number of years. Through this experience the City recognized the obstacles that exist for those with mobility challenges and initiated a comprehensive planning process that included best practices research with other municipalities focused on improving accessibility in their communities, significant stakeholder and public engagement with Lethbridge residents with lived experience and supporting local organizations, as well as direct interviews with City Business Units to better understand actions taken, lessons learned and future plans for accessibility improvements in their areas of influence.



2.1 Research

At the outset of the project, the project team reviewed relevant City documents and conducted research on best practices in the field of accessibility and urban design. The team reached out to municipalities across Canada regarding accessibility policies and enforcement and institutions in the United States to better understand best practices and emerging trends in the field of universal design. Once research was complete, a comprehensive approach was taken for the development of the Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP). The project process can generally be summarized in the Process Graphic.



2.2 Community Engagement

In addition to research, stakeholder and public engagement was a primary component in the development of the MAMP. The City undertook a comprehensive engagement strategy, aimed at connecting with people with lived experience, organizations who represent and advocate for those with disabilities, internal City departments, and the general public. Over the course of the project, the City connected with specific user groups and organizations, held three stakeholder engagement sessions, and hosted three public engagement sessions. In addition to in-person meetings and sessions, the City of Lethbridge utilized an online engagement tool called **Get Involved Lethbridge** to gather feedback and input from the public.

Three main stakeholder groups were engaged throughout the process:

- People with disabilities or mobility limitations;
- Community organizations that represent or advocate for people with disabilities, and
- The general public.

The **Get Involved Lethbridge** online engagement tool was used as part of the project's public engagement launch. On the project website, visitors were able to use a community forum to comment on challenges they experience while getting around, visiting city buildings and park facilities, and comment on improvements they would like to see. Website visitors also had the opportunity to geographically identify mobility/accessibility concerns and successes around the city. The City received more than 90 locational pins over the course of the project process. Throughout the project, the **Get Involved Lethbridge** website was well used and promoted to the community as a place to access information, and to provide input and feedback on the process.

In addition to the **Get Involved Lethbridge** website, the project team held three in-person stakeholder engagement sessions, three public engagement sessions, and established contacts with various local organizations. Individual invitations for the stakeholder engagement sessions were sent to residents with lived experience and local organizations.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

- October 30, 2018, City Hall
- March 12, 2019, City Hall
- January 28, 2020, City Hall

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

- October 30, 2018, City Hall
- March 12, 2019, City Hall
- May 29, 2019, CASA

Home » Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan

L Louise
a year ago

Although there are two accessible parking spaces with the appropriate space between them with the properly painted lines, it is not accessible to the sidewalk cut out when the snow is cleared from the sidewalk right into the access pathway between the parking spaces and block the cutout with snow. This occurs at every parking space for disabled in Lethbridge.

Marker
715 2 Avenue S, Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4Y1, Canada

- NEWS FEED
- LET'S TALK
- PLACES
- GUESTBOOK

Mobility/Accessibility Concerns

over 1 year

Place a pin where you have encountered issues or concerns with mobility/accessibility.

[Go to Map](#)



MOBILITY ACCESSIBILITY

Master Plan

During stakeholder engagement sessions, participants were asked to share their typical daily experience navigating the physical environment. Through discussions, participants identified municipal services, facilities, and infrastructure that they typically use, and discussed what works well and what challenges they face.

Public Engagement sessions were held in conjunction with the City's **Get Involved Community Conversations** events and consisted of a number of presentation boards providing project information. During the initial Community Conversations, members of the public were asked to provide input through the **Get Involved Lethbridge** online mapping tool. In subsequent Community Conversations, members of the public were asked to provide feedback on the outline of the MAMP. Team members were available during the Community Conversations to answer questions and provide additional information on the project.

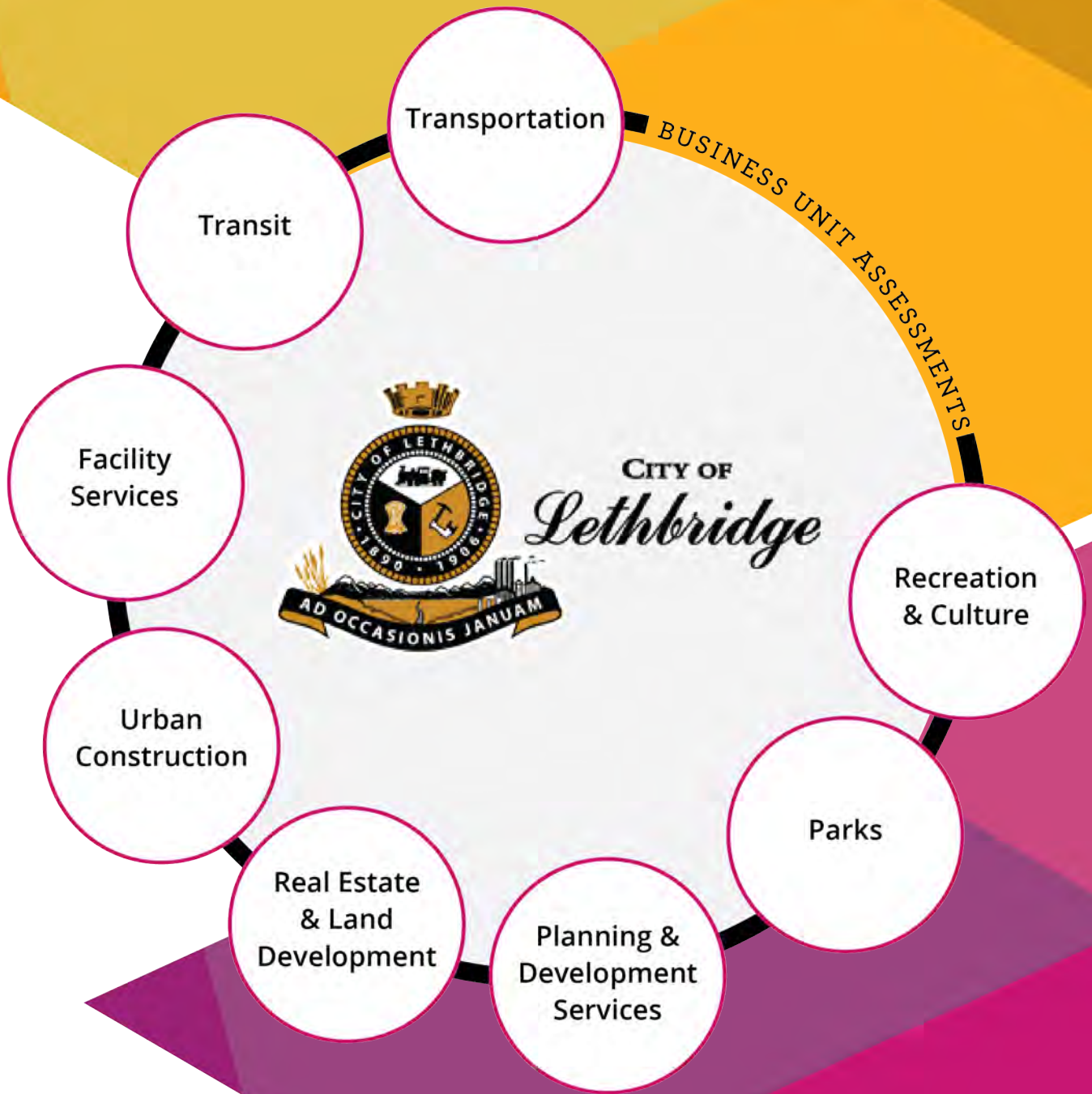
2.3 Business Unit Engagement

Since Business Units are at varying stages of applying and implementing accessibility improvements, an individual assessment of the following eight Business Units was conducted to review Business Unit roles and mandates as it relates to accessibility.

- Facility Services.
- Parks.
- Real Estate & Land Development.
- Planning & Development.
- Transit.
- Transportation.
- Recreation & Culture.
- Urban Construction.

These Business Unit Assessments included site visits and tours to view first-hand progress made to date and accessibility challenges. Obstacles and challenges were recorded using an online GIS-mapping tool.

In addition to the Business Unit Assessments, regular meetings were held with the Mobility/Accessibility Working Group (MAWG) to discuss findings and to solicit feedback throughout the process. The MAMP endeavours to address the challenges identified during the Business Unit Assessments and establish key actions that will support the development of an inclusive and accessible physical environment in Lethbridge.







3. WHAT ARE WE AIMING FOR?

At the time this document was written, there were no precedents in Canada for plans like the Mobility/ Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP). However, there were other communities, like the City of Lethbridge, who recognized the challenge and were already investing in infrastructure to improve mobility and accessibility for their residents. Those sources provided insight and understanding about current best practices (what is working well in today's context). As this becomes a priority for more municipalities, the standards and best practices may change; this is expected and encouraged, and the MAMP is meant to be updated with these advancements. The document itself, and the actions that come out of it, should be kept relevant as the nature of accessibility continues to evolve.

3.1 Best Practices: Universal Design Principles

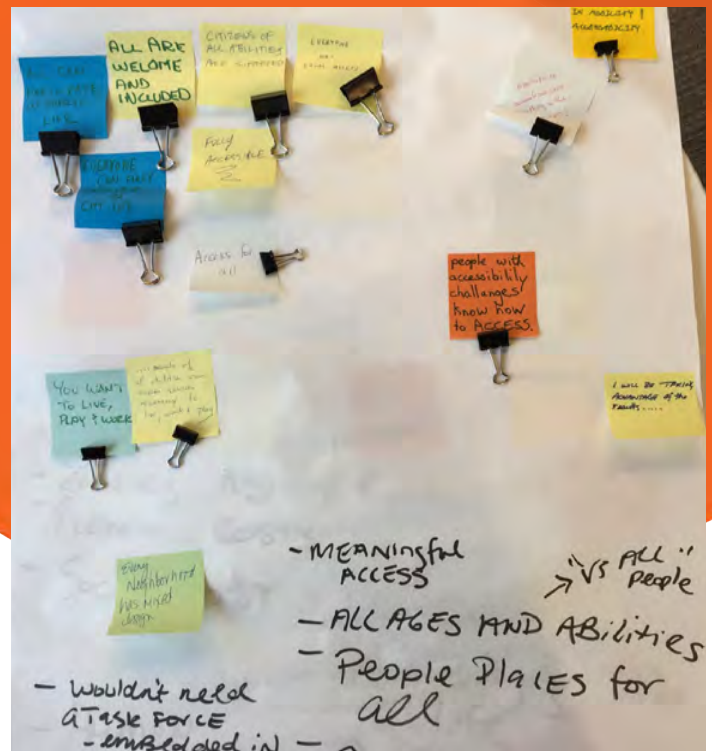
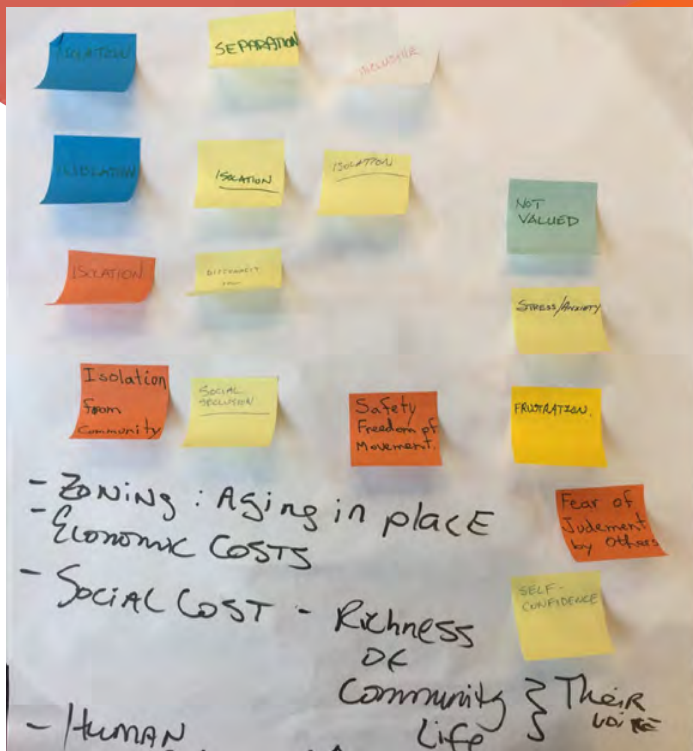
Universal design aspires to create environments that are usable by everyone. By using the principles of universal design, accessibility and compliance to regulations or standards can be brought together.

Universal design and compliance with accessibility regulations are very different things. Universal design addresses the *minimum* requirements for ensuring access for people with disabilities – but also considers the needs of everyone else. Universal design is a design process intended to create environments that are usable by all people. For example, a sensor controlled automatic door opener in a public facility provides equitable access to all users regardless of ability, although a tactile indicator is required on both sides of the doorway to assist a person who may be blind and who uses a white cane. Designs which work toward the creation of the universal city include:

- Pathways, street crossings, and plazas which are free of hazards and barriers to the flow of movement.
- All people, citizens and visitors alike, have access to the information they need in the form they require to find their way through the city.
- Public buildings accommodate the diverse needs of the population in a cost-effective yet dignified and pleasant manner.
- Goods and services in these buildings are easy to find and access.
- Obtaining employment and being productive are not constrained by physical barriers.

In Ontario, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is an act that guides the development, implementation and enforcement of standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation and buildings. The Act was passed in 2005, with the goal of developing a fully accessible Ontario by the year 2025. In 2011, the Ontario Integrated Accessibility Standards came into effect, establishing accessibility requirements that apply to all public, private, and non-profit organizations. Through the Act, municipalities and other organizations are required to periodically file an accessibility compliance report with the provincial government, confirming that the organization has met applicable requirements under the AODA.

In 2001, the City of London, Ontario created the Facilities Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) as a technical document to guide the planning and design of newly constructed or renovated municipal facilities. FADS goes beyond the Ontario Building Code and incorporates the principles of universal design and is reflective of research on accessible, barrier-free environments and consultation with organizations such as: Canadian Hearing Society, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and Learning Disabilities Association. London was one of the first municipalities in Ontario to establish accessibility design standards. As such many municipalities across Canada and the United States have adopted or adapted



FADS for use in their communities. At the City of Lethbridge, the Facility Services Business Unit has adapted the FADS to create the Accessibility Design Guide.

The Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDeA) is located at the University of Buffalo and conducts extensive research in Universal Design in North America. IDeA was also heavily involved in the development of Universal Design New York, a guide intended to raise awareness on the values of universal design, encourage the application of universal design principles, and provide examples of the implementation of universal design. Through discussion, IDeA highlighted:

- The potential for push-back from the development and building industry in the application of accessibility and universal design requirements, since these requirements are typically a higher standard than building codes.
- The importance of connecting with the private sector to gain buy-in for the application of accessibility and universal design requirements.

The efforts of these communities and organizations have resulted in increased awareness and understanding of the need for accessibility and mobility improvements in all physical settings for the benefit of everyone. However, the work is not finished. Lessons continue to be learned and new design techniques continue to be tested. The City of Lethbridge is committed to doing their part, going forward, to stay informed and to contribute to broader understanding around this important community issue.

3.2 The 7 Principles of Universal Design

Universal Design is defined as¹:

The design and composition of an environment, product or service so that it may be accessed, understood and used:

- To the greatest possible extent;
- In the most independent and natural manner possible;
- In the widest possible range of situations; and
- Without the need for adaptation, modification, assistive devices or specialized solutions, by any persons of any age or size or having any particular physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual ability or disability.

Universal Design pushes the boundaries of ‘mainstream’ products, services and environments to include as many people as possible and strives to minimize the difficulties of adaptation to particular users. Universal Design is a process, not an outcome. It is not assumed or expected that a 100% universal solution will be achieved, or is achievable, for any given design. Rather Universal Design should be a goal that a designer strives to incorporate.

3.2.1 PRINCIPLE 1: EQUITABLE USE

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Guidelines:

- Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- Make the design appealing to all.

3.2.2 PRINCIPLE 2: FLEXIBILITY IN USE

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Guidelines:

- Provide choice in methods of use.
- Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- Facilitate the user’s accuracy and precision.
- Provide adaptability to the user’s pace.

1

2005 Disability Act, Irish Statute Book

3.2.3 PRINCIPLE 3: SIMPLE AND INTUITIVE USE

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

Guidelines:

- Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
- Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

3.2.4 PRINCIPLE 4: PERCEPTIBLE INFORMATION

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Guidelines:

- Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- Maximize "legibility" of essential information.
- Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

3.2.5 PRINCIPLE 5: TOLERANCE FOR ERROR

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Guidelines:

- Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- Provide fail safe features.
- Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

3.2.6 PRINCIPLE 6: LOW PHYSICAL EFFORT

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

Guidelines:

- Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- Use reasonable operating forces.
- Minimize repetitive actions.
- Minimize sustained physical effort.

3.2.7 PRINCIPLE 7: SIZE AND SPACE FOR APPROACH AND USE

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Guidelines:

- Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

By incorporating the principles of Universal Design, the MAMP recognizes the importance of creating an environment that is accessible for all, regardless of ability. Implementation of the MAMP may result in policies or standards that are above and beyond building codes, however it will further the corporate vision for accessibility/mobility.

Emerging trends in universal design include:

- Visitability, which is a concept that encourages new housing to focus on ease of access for people with disabilities by incorporating a level entry, wide hallways, and a full bathroom on the main floor. Some municipalities in the United States are currently mandating that new housing be 'visitabile'.
- Adaptability, which incorporates building design and features that look "normal", but can be adapted according to need.
- Complete Streets, which accommodate multiple modes of travel and users with varying abilities.
- Innovative Solutions for Universal Design, which is a universal design certification program.
- "Lifespan Design" which considers the needs of all age groups and can be adapted to accommodate all users.



City of Lethbridge Capital Project

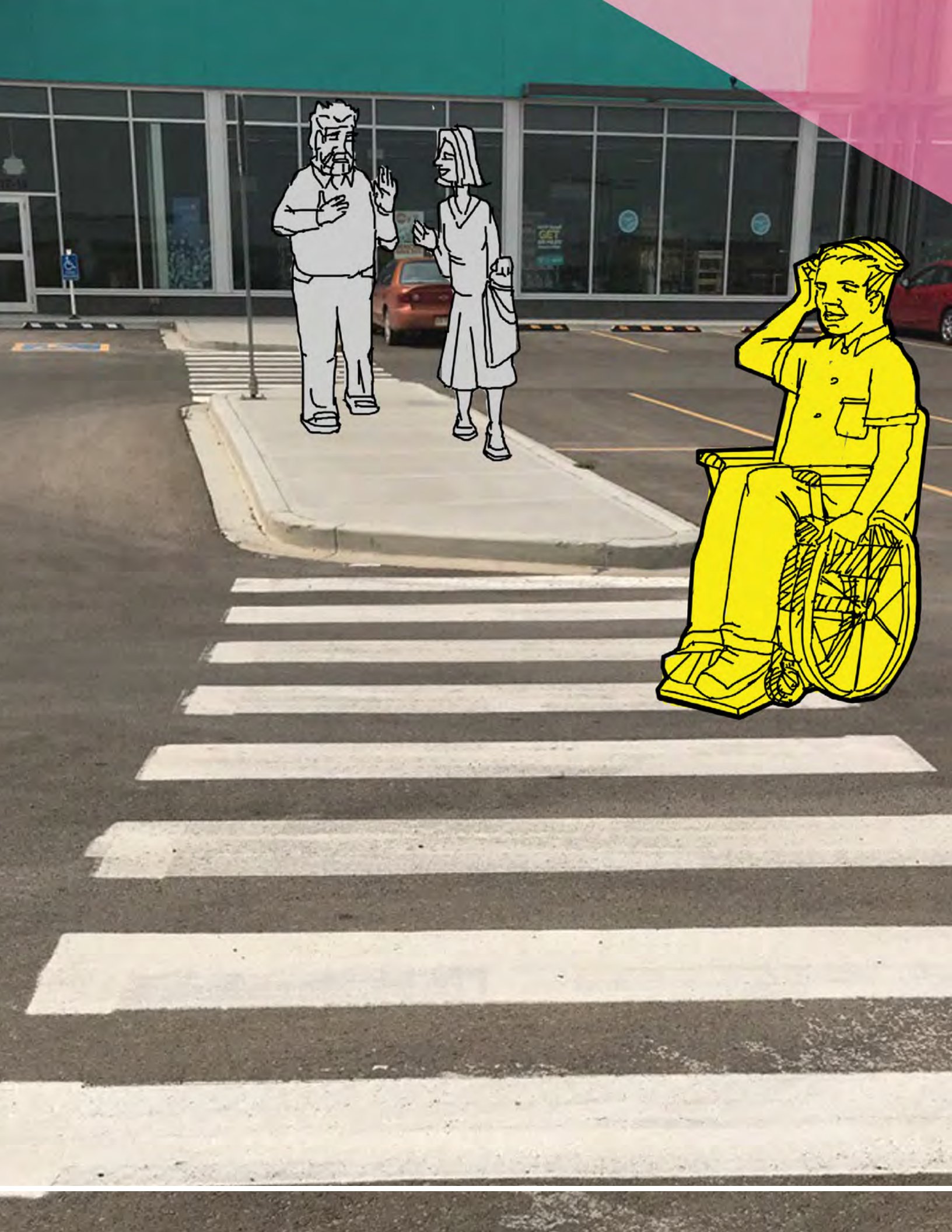
YATES RENEWAL

CANADA CULTURAL SPACES FUND	\$3,500,000
MUNICIPAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE GRANT	\$6,250,000
CITY OF LETHBRIDGE	\$3,650,000
TOTAL:	\$13,400,000

CONSTRUCTION MANAGER: STUART OLSON
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CONSULTANT: SONGER ARCHITECTS

City of
Lethbridge

PROJECT COORDINATOR





4. WHERE ARE WE RIGHT NOW?

4.1 Policy Direction

The development and implementation of the Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP) is enabled and guided by City policies, including the City Council Strategic Plan, the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan/Municipal Development Plan (ICSP/MDP), the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and City Infrastructure Standards.

The City of Lethbridge Council Strategic Plan 2017-2021 identifies five main goals for the administration, which include ensuring livable and compassionate communities and creating people places for all.

Council intends to achieve these goals by:

- Creating a focus on people-centred developments.
- Exploring opportunities for age friendly community design.
- Ensuring transportation systems connect people to where they live, work and play.
- Working to establish barrier-free access.
- Ensuring services, programs and facilities are inclusive.
- Ensuring accessible and affordable City facilities.
- Providing opportunity for inclusion in Lethbridge's cultural life.
- Working with developers to ensure design of pedestrian-friendly commercial areas.
- Examining the opportunity for a pilot project to develop a pedestrian-friendly downtown.

The ICSP/MDP encourages a sustainable city that enables all residents to fully participate in community life by:

- Promoting active involvement of residents in all facets of governance and community life.
- Ensuring that recreation, transportation, housing, education and employment opportunities are economically and physically accessible to all residents.
- Striving to ensure that residents are not physically, socially or culturally isolated and remain a respected part of the greater community.
- Developing recreational and sports facilities and amenities that are physically and financially accessible to all residents.
- Ensuring the physical accessibility needs of residents are met throughout the city.
- Ensuring accessibility to parks and open spaces.



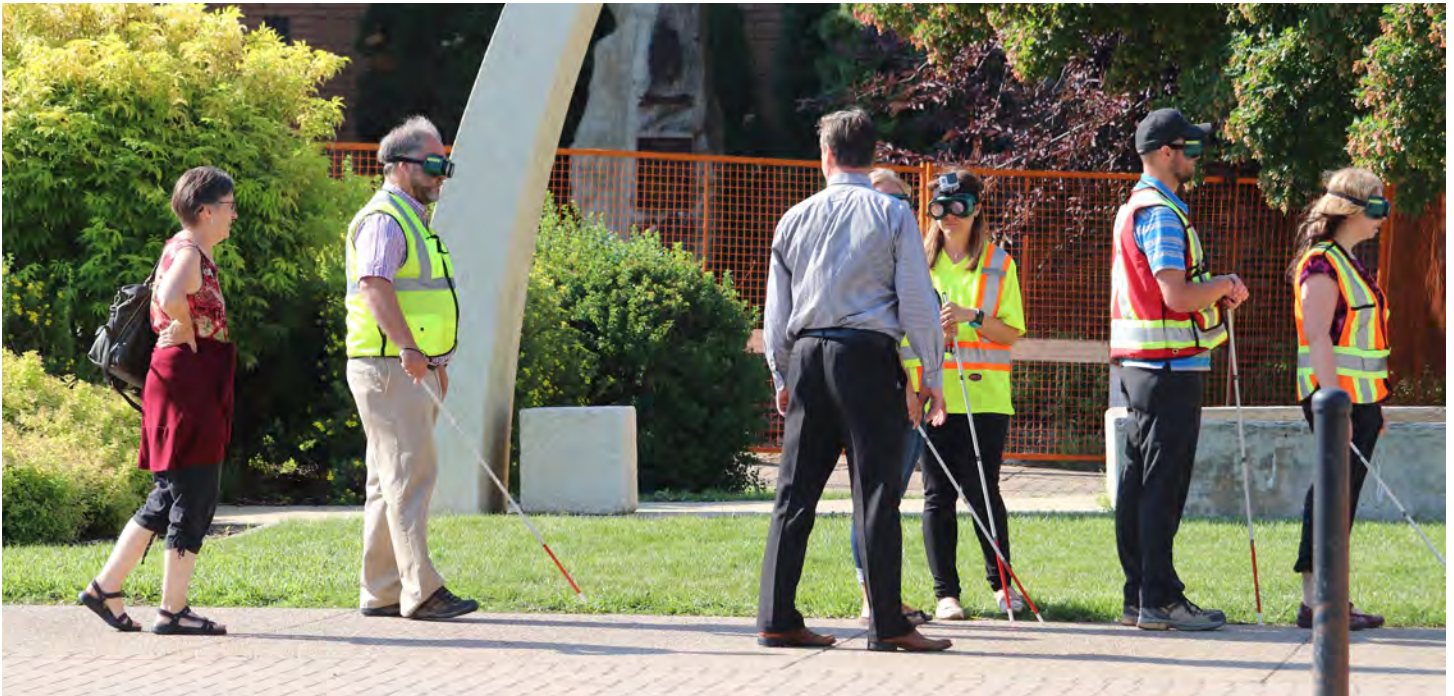
As part of the General Rules for All Districts, the LUB contains Mobility/Accessibility regulations which outline development application submission requirements. Depending on the type of application, applicants are required to demonstrate Mobility/Accessibility components of the proposed development on site plans. Mobility/Accessibility development standards are also included in LUB regulations.

The City recognizes that an accessible environment for all is important, and in recent years has taken steps in advancing the goal of an accessible physical environment. In 2013, the City of Lethbridge established the Mobility/Accessibility Working Group (MAWG), consisting of representatives from eight Business Units within the City:

- Facility Services.
- Parks.
- Real Estate & Land Development.
- Planning & Development.
- Transit.
- Transportation.
- Recreation & Culture.
- Urban Construction.

How can we talk to the City about needs if we are vision or hearing impaired and can't use its websites?

- Lethbridge Resident



Since inception, the MAWG has been focused on making physical improvements to existing facilities and infrastructure. A sample of improvements and policies implemented so far include:

- Land Use Bylaw amendments to include development standards and policies requiring applicants to demonstrate accessibility components of the proposed development on site plans.
- Development of Complete Streets guidelines to ensure main transportation corridors are accessible in multiple modes and by people of different ages and abilities.
- Completion of a Mobility Accessibility Facility Design Guide establishing standards and guidelines for the design and construction of new facilities and retrofits or alterations to existing facilities.
- Accessibility improvements to parks including accessible picnic areas in Indian Battle Park, and development of playgrounds with various spaces for different ages and abilities like those at Henderson Park and Paradise Canyon.
- Entire transit bus fleet of accessible buses that are equipped with low-floor wheelchair system and auditory and visual next stop notification systems.
- Plans for accessibility audits of public facilities and parks to prioritize and focus future efforts.
- Increased crossing times on pedestrian signals at various intersections.
- Trial of a pedestrian signal system in downtown.

Bus service is not consistent in some areas of the city. I have to walk more than 1.5 kms to get basic services from home.

- Lethbridge Resident



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSION:

As part of the introductory stages of the project, a number of City staff underwent Disability Awareness and Simulation Training to experience the city from the perspective of people living with different impairments. As part of simulation training, participants were given an opportunity to experience vision loss through the use of specially designed goggles and mobility challenges by using a wheelchair. Participants were taken in and around City Hall, where they could briefly experience the challenge of moving around a physical space with a disability.

To grow awareness and understanding, further opportunities for simulation training should be offered for the rest of the corporation.





5. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Business Units

Each Business Unit is at varying stages of implementing policies and measures for accessibility. A number of Business Units have completed physical improvements or developed new policies and are anticipating guidance from this Plan to provide a framework for implementation of accessibility strategies. However, the Business Units identified some common themes as they were asked to think about some opportunities and challenges for the Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP).



Among **Business Units**, common opportunities and challenges emerged:



Opportunities:

- Develop a broader understanding of accessibility and universal design.
- Enhance public education.
- Increase collaboration between Business Units.
- Create partnerships with external entities.
- Develop relevant standards.



Challenges:

- Need to establish a clear mandate for accessibility.
- Prioritization of projects, aging infrastructure, and facilities that are in need of upgrades or accessibility retrofits.
- Access to funding for accessibility projects.
- Gaps between public and private spaces.
- Impacts of winter conditions on ability to easily navigate the physical environment.
- Access-A-Ride, a City of Lethbridge service for people who are unable to access the regular public transit service, experiences issues with frequency and availability at time of need.

Before project initiation, the City had engaged with stakeholders with lived experience to better understand successes and areas for improvement within the physical environment. Continued engagement with stakeholders is expected to ensure that future initiatives address community needs.



Among **Stakeholders**, common opportunities and challenges emerged:



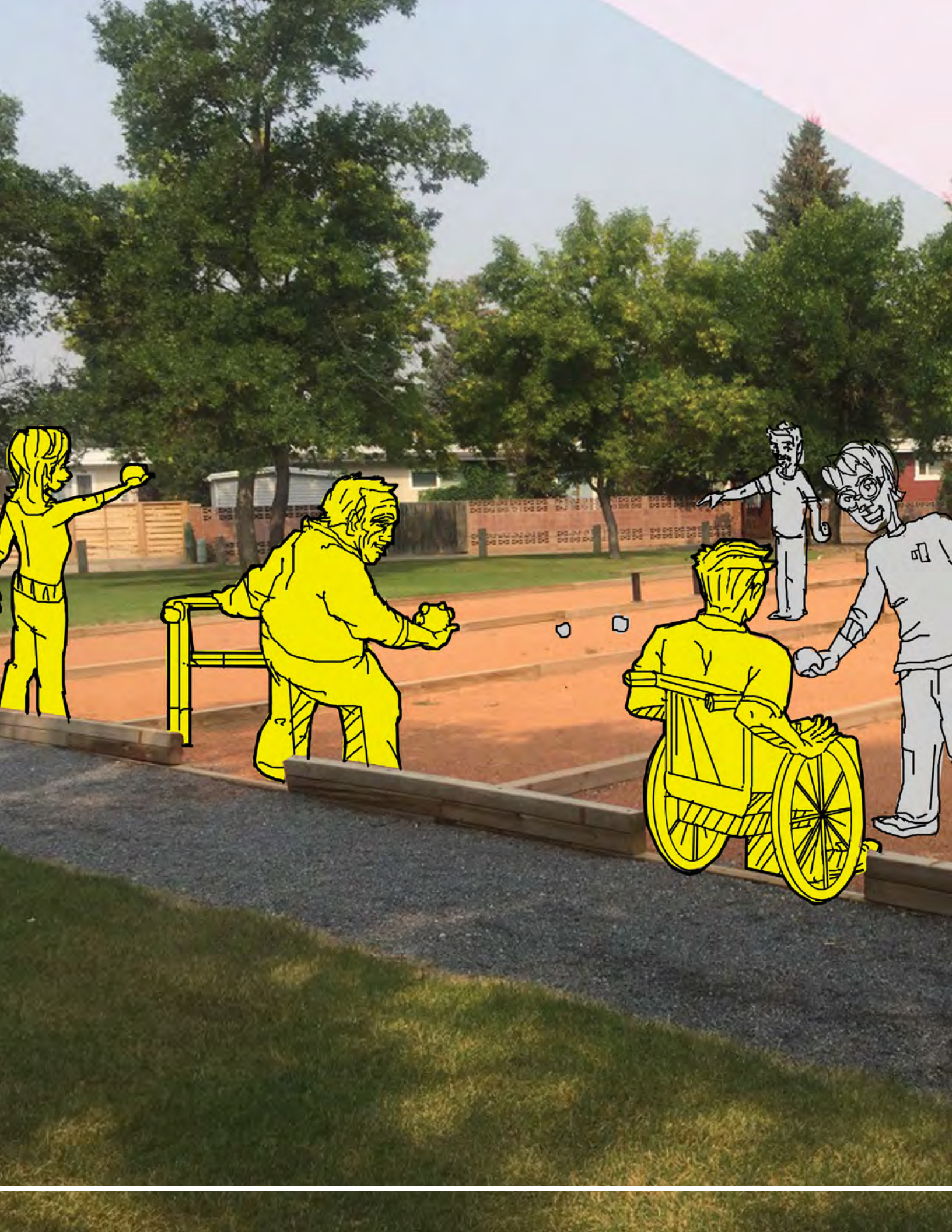
Opportunities

- Consistent design for all intersections.
- Accessible park and picnic spaces.
- Walkways with smooth surfaces like those at Henderson Lake are easy to navigate.
- Opportunity to use the MAMP process to increase public education on accessibility.



Challenges

- Limited accessible taxis in the city.
- Limited or inconsistent bus service.
- Difficulty using Access-A-Ride for 'last minute' trips.
- Grade and other physical transitions between public and private property can be dangerous and difficult to navigate.
- Difficulties navigating the city in the winter.





6. PLAN
VISION &
GOALS

6.1 Vision

The project team underwent an extensive visioning workshop to establish the vision for the Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP). During the workshop, the team worked through an empathy mapping exercise that established four characters:

- **Bob**, a senior with mobility issues due to a hip replacement.
- **Fatima**, a mother who is completely blind in one eye and partially blind in the other.
- **Kyle**, a young professional who became paraplegic after a diving accident.
- **Amanda**, an executive director of a non-profit who was born deaf and does not speak.

The exercise encouraged team members to put themselves in the characters' shoes to consider how the characters might access services, navigate, and live in Lethbridge.

The project team discussed barriers to accessibility and explored ways in which the City could play a role in removing these barriers, making a positive impact on the lives of the characters. The team also considered operational realities that might limit the City's ability to remove barriers to accessibility and buy-in that would be required to successfully create an accessible physical environment in Lethbridge.

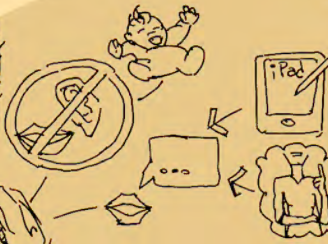
Ultimately, the team developed the vision for the MAMP:

“The City of Lethbridge is a place where people of all ages and abilities can participate in the community. The Master Plan will guide the optimization of our physical infrastructure to allow for equal access to programs and services for ALL people, including those with physical, sensory and cognitive challenges.”

6.2 Goals

- Focus on who we are building for and the user-experience.
- Partner externally and collaborate internally.
- Prioritize to maximize investment and leverage existing projects.
- Raise awareness and commit to continuous learning.
- Consider accessibility year-round, making it part of a Winter City strategy.

Amenda



FATIMA



Kyle



BOB







7. CITY
RESPONSIBILITIES
& COMMITMENTS
TO ACCESSIBILITY

7.1 Clarify Roles & Responsibilities

The City of Lethbridge as a corporation will play a main role in the implementation of the Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP); as the steward of public space and infrastructure, the City must be a champion for an accessible physical environment in Lethbridge. The City is responsible for creating a mandate that empowers all Business Units to take action. This mandate is necessary for realizing the vision for the MAMP. The City will be responsible for:

- Providing leadership to ensure universal design becomes an overarching City theme.
- Determining the annual funding needed to advance accessibility goals.
- Implementing and monitoring the actions within this Plan.
- Reviewing the MAMP regularly to ensure it remains a relevant living document.

Business Units at the City are responsible for carrying out actions to achieve the vision for accessibility. While all Business Units will take an individualized approach to implementing the MAMP, the following five core roles should be considered by each Business Unit:

1. **Innovator & Incubator:** Implementation, testing, and piloting of new ideas and projects.
2. **Catalyst:** Be a champion for accessibility and set an example to private industry of what is possible and what works.
3. **Partner & Liaison:** Collaborate with private industries, local organizations and stakeholders with lived experience.
4. **Policy Driver:** Develop guidelines, standards, and policies for accessibility and ensure policies are adhered to.
5. **Implementor:** Implement accessibility initiatives and regularly evaluate success of initiatives.

7.2 Key Actions

1. Administration to provide regular updates to City Council regarding accessibility education, budget requirements and improvements.
2. Administration to ensure that the MAMP is implemented and that actions are taken to advance the vision.
3. Administration to ensure the MAMP is reviewed regularly and required amendments are implemented.

7.3 Lead Teams

- Mobility/Accessibility Working Group (MAWG), in collaboration with other City Business Units, will lead the implementation of key actions.

7.4 Time Frame

- Administration to review capital improvement and operating budgets as part of regular budget review cycle.
- Administration to initiate regular reviews and updates of the MAMP approximately every 5 years.
- Administration to ensure the MAMP is implemented based on confirmed timing with the MAWG.

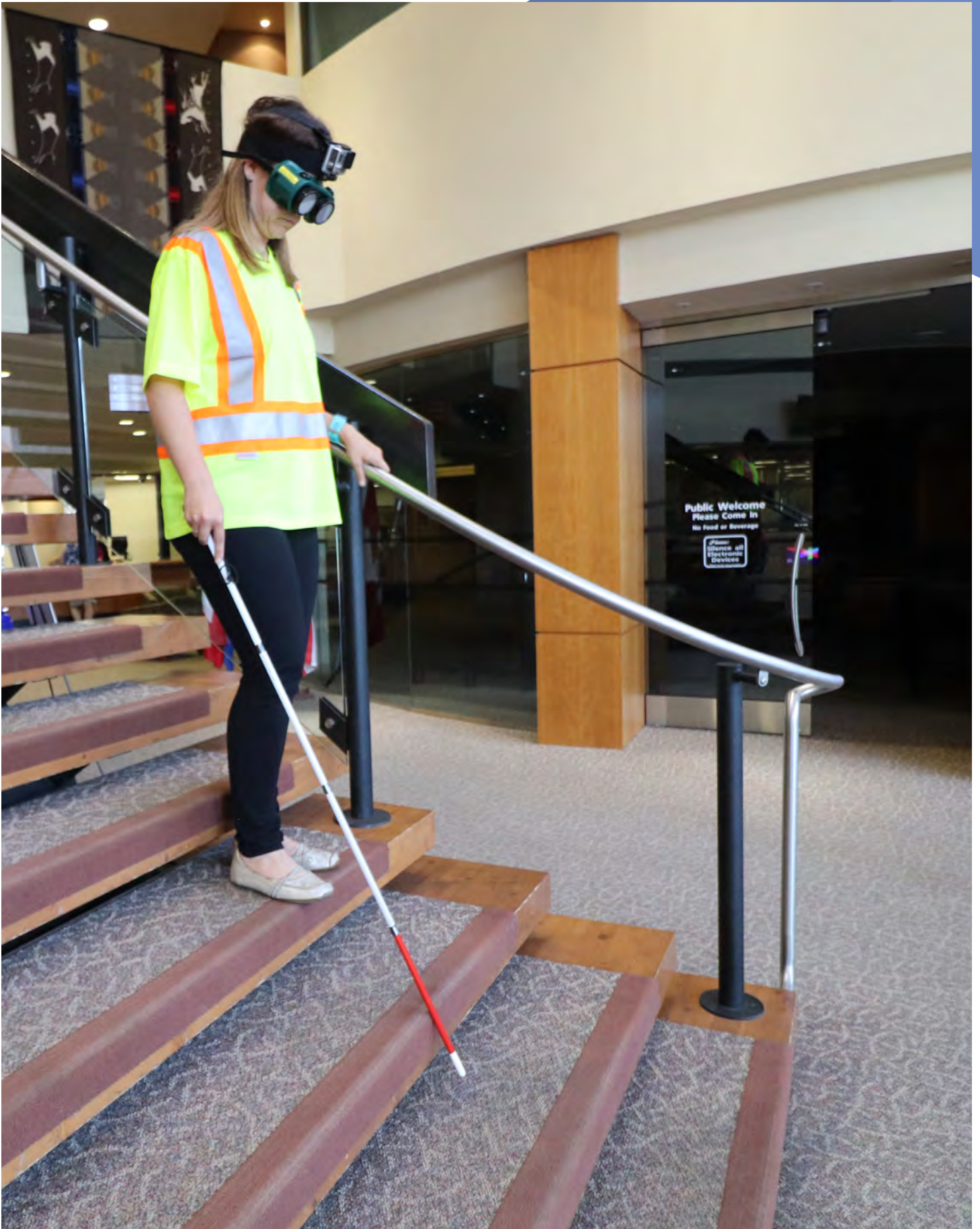


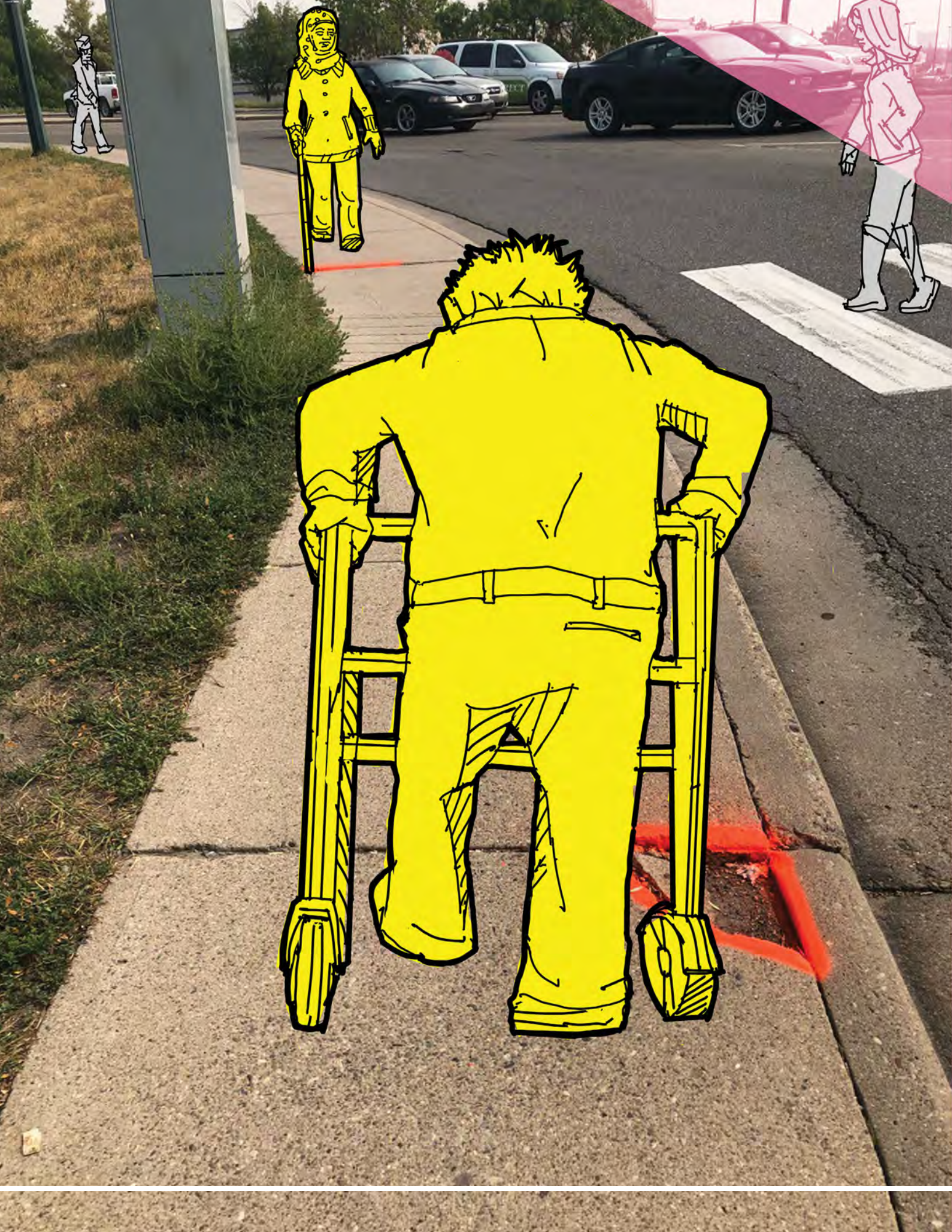
MOBILITY/ACCESSIBILITY WORKING GROUP (MAWG):

Is an internal group to the City comprised of representatives from various City Business Units. Representation on the MAWG should be determined by the Business Units.

Specific roles and responsibilities should be articulated in a Terms of Reference for the MAWG. Potential responsibilities may include:

- » Meet regularly.
- » Discuss MAMP successes and challenges.
- » Make recommendations for amendments or reviews to MAMP as needed.
- » Be a conduit to Senior Leadership and to Council on accessibility matters.
- » Prepare an Annual Report for Council and maintain a prioritized list of upcoming projects to be considered in Annual Budget.
- » Research and stay informed on best practices in field of accessibility and universal design.
- » Identify opportunities for the City to incorporate accessibility policies/ improvements into new developments.
- » Share information with all Business Units by annually facilitating half-day session to discuss accessibility improvements, successes, and future improvements for the physical environment.
- » Connect with development industry, stakeholders, local organizations and the public on accessibility and universal design in the community.
- » Communicate and share information about accessibility.







8. INCREASE BUSINESS UNIT COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

During the Business Unit assessments, many of the Business Units identified the Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP) as an opportunity to be a catalyst for better internal collaboration that would result in more opportunities to improve accessibility. By prioritizing collaboration among Business Units during the development process, this will ensure that accessibility is considered from different perspectives and potential implications and impacts are identified.



It was identified that increased internal communication and education are needed. Business Units should seek opportunities to increase internal communications and collaboration through the formation of interdisciplinary teams. Further education and training on accessibility should also be completed, and by raising awareness and understanding within the City, staff and front-line employees will be better informed and equipped to manage accessibility requests.

Increased internal collaboration is intended to:

- Initiate accessibility discussions during the development application and drawing review process.
- Highlight potential roadblocks or difficulties that might be experienced during the development process relating to accessibility requirements.
- Explore opportunities for integrated teams for project delivery.
- Explore opportunities to partner with other Business Units to access funding for accessibility projects.
- Facilitate ongoing education of staff and users.
- Build capacity within City Hall to think differently about accessibility and to implement best practices in accessibility and universal design.
- Ensure that all Business Units are aware of and understand various accessibility or universal design requirements.
- Encourage research and knowledge-sharing between Business Units on best practices and emerging trends in accessibility and universal design.

8.1 Key Actions

1. Make simulation training available to key municipal staff.
2. Establish an internal platform (potentially connected to existing file systems) where staff can share information related to accessibility projects, challenges and best practices.
3. Develop a collaborative decision-making process focused on desired outcomes that could include the following components:
 - » Assess the situation through the lens of Universal Design.
 - » Confirm the challenge that needs to be addressed and why.
 - » Articulate the desired outcome.
 - » Research best-practices.
 - » Solicit feedback from internal/external partners including those with lived experience.
 - » Confirm way forward.
 - » Confirm check-in points along the way.
 - » Monitor progress and review results.

8.2 Lead Teams

- The Mobility/Accessibility Working Group (MAWG) to lead implementation of Key Actions.

8.3 Time Frame

- Key Actions to take place within 2 years.





9. BUILD
EXTERNAL
PARTNERSHIPS

Accessibility goes beyond public spaces and the development of the physical environment. It requires cooperation and collaboration with multiple entities. The City cannot achieve its vision for accessibility alone and partnership with external parties is essential.

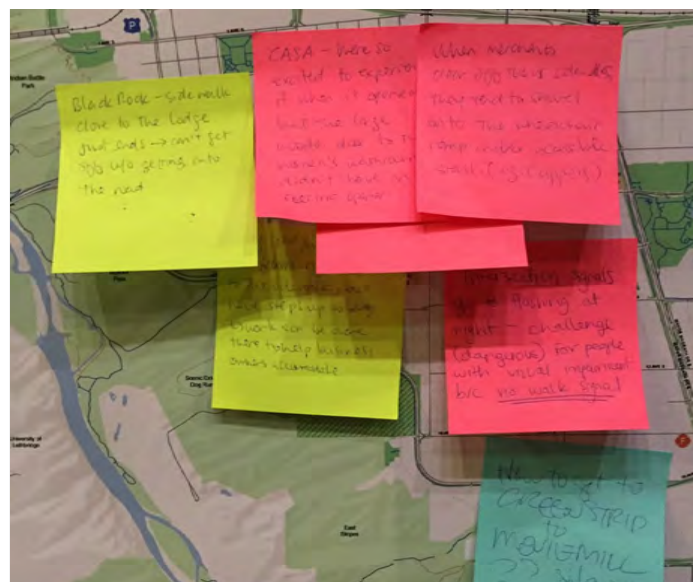
The City should continue to collaborate with partners such as residents with lived experience and local organizations and groups who represent these stakeholders. This will enable the City to interact directly with stakeholders to:

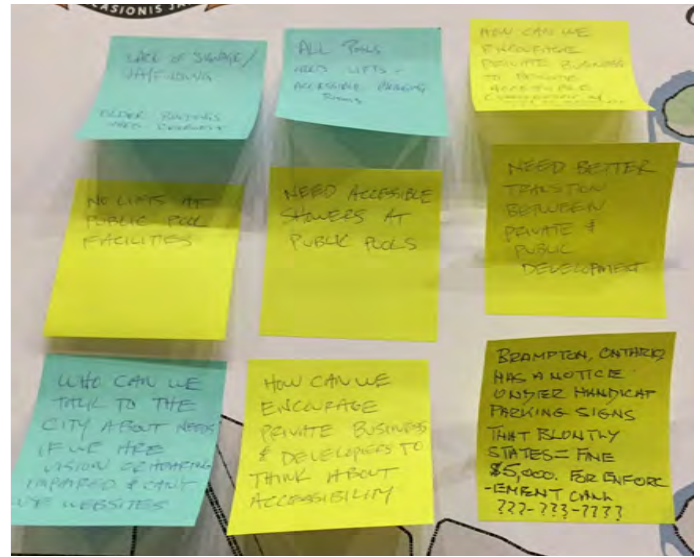
- Understand the needs of those with various impairments and abilities;
- Gain feedback on the built environment and implementation of various accessibility improvements; and
- Identify future opportunities for other improvements.

Stakeholder input provides a realistic perspective and should be used to influence processes and requirements.

The City should also continue to collaborate and communicate with development and building industry partners such as land developers, consultants, and contractors. Industry partners are involved in building much of the physical environment, and the implementation of accessibility requirements will have an impact. Industry partners should be engaged and given access to educational opportunities on an ongoing basis to ensure understanding and gain buy-in for the City's vision for accessibility, solicit feedback on the effects of Mobility/Accessibility Master Plan (MAMP) implementation, and to play an active role in the implementation of best practices and emerging trends in accessibility and universal design.

Implementation of the MAMP may result in policies or initiatives that suggest standards that exceed existing building codes and specifications. Therefore, targeted communication and engagement with external partners such as the development industry, community organizations, and the public will be essential. It is important to ensure that partners understand the rationale for the changes and can interpret policies and standards for their development proposals and are equipped to demonstrate how they incorporate accessibility features specific to the site and its intended use, rather than from the perspective of simply compliance to a code or set of standards. The City will need to offer clear, direct explanations and justifications for the requirements (i.e. more economical in the long-term), as well as opportunities for feedback and discussion.





Examples of external partners may include:

- Residents with mobility, visual, hearing, or cognitive impairments.
- Seniors.
- Children and youth.
- Organizations representing stakeholders with lived experience.
- Contractors.
- BILD Lethbridge.
- School Districts.
- Post Secondary Institutions.

Establishing meaningful partnerships is part of the collaborative process and is intended to:

- Share the responsibility and ownership of building an accessible physical environment outside of City Hall.
- Increase awareness of expectations for accessible development in Lethbridge.
- Encourage regular communication and engagement about accessibility with various partners.
- Create opportunities to hear feedback from stakeholders with lived experience, local organizations, and the development industry.
- Create opportunities to test new ideas or best practices in accessibility or universal design.
- Develop local expertise in accessibility or universal design.
- Build a network of experts and champions for accessibility.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with external partners to access funding for accessibility.



9.1 Key Actions

1. Develop the Accessibility Think Tank (See description on the following page).
2. Provide user training for municipal facilities and infrastructure by request to local organizations representing stakeholders with lived experience.
3. Develop a Communication Plan to create greater awareness about training opportunities.

9.2 Lead Teams

- Mobility/Accessibility Working Group (MAWG) to lead implementation of Key Actions.

9.3 Time Frame

- Establish Accessibility Think Tank within 1-2 years.
- Initiate user training for municipal facilities within 1-2 years.



ACCESSIBILITY THINK TANK (ATT):

Establish an Accessibility Think Tank (ATT) comprised of stakeholders with lived experience, representatives from local organizations, and representatives from the development industry. The Accessibility Think Tank will be focused on bringing different voices to the table to discuss opportunities in accessibility.

The MAWG will be the link to the Think Tank. The primary role of the Think Tank is to be a forum where participants with different perspectives can discuss and provide feedback on accessibility improvements and requirements in the built environment. Prior to establishing the Accessibility Think Tank, a Terms of Reference should be drafted to clarify responsibilities.

The Terms of Reference should make it clear that the purpose of the ATT is to serve the City as a proactive thinking partner that helps to:

- » Prioritize the most impactful accessibility improvements.
- » Bring the lived experience voice into balance with business practicalities.

The Terms of Reference should also clarify that it is NOT intended to serve as:

- » An advocacy body who works against the City's partnering approach.
- » The only voice of accessibility.
- » A debate forum to relieve potential tensions between the business community, those with lived experience, land developers, and the City.





10. AREAS OF FOCUS

Based on the feedback received through the Business Unit assessments and stakeholder engagement, 13 Areas of Focus emerged.

The Areas of Focus identified are tangible initiatives that can significantly improve accessibility for all in Lethbridge.



Each Area of Focus is broken down into the following components:



Introduction – describes the context and current situation and associated opportunity or challenge.



Objective – describes the desired outcome of the intervention.



Considerations – describes the situation and alludes to the actions required to address the issue.



Business Unit Actions – lists the actions required to achieve the objective identified.



Collaboration – identifies which internal and external groups will be responsible for taking action. Project collaboration with other Business Units will ensure broader opportunities are identified and understood early in the process leading to more comprehensive, integrated and efficient project delivery.

- **Lead Team** – identifies the Business Units or groups responsible for initiating the action, facilitating the collaboration, tracking progress and reporting back to the Supporting Team and others on the outcomes.
- **Supporting Team** – identifies the Business Units or groups that are best positioned to support, contribute to and participate in the required actions.



Possible External Partnerships – identifies the external organizations and agencies that may have a shared interest with the City in advancing this Area of Focus.



Timeframe – recommends action within one of three timeframes:

- Short Term (0-3 years)
- Medium Term (4-7 years)
- Long Term (7+ years)



Financial Considerations – outlines, at a high level, the financial elements that should be considered with each initiative.

A. Seek Sustainable Funding for Facility Retrofits



The Facility Services Business Unit is committed to improving accessibility in all publicly owned and operated facilities in the city to increase user participation in the community. Significant progress has been made (i.e. electric change tables and lifts, 36" doorways, etc.) with the construction of new facilities, however much work is still left to be done. The Facility Services Business Unit budget, as determined through the annual municipal budget process, is intended to be used for operational and maintenance projects, not functional upgrades. Therefore, there are limited funds available for accessibility retrofit projects. Currently there is a 4-year (2018-2021) CIP funding initiative for Facility Assessment and Accessibility Upgrades that will provide some dedicated capital, however with more than 100 publicly accessible facilities of varying ages in the city, this is a daunting task to provide functional upgrades with limited resources. In the past, the Facility Services Business Unit has financed retrofit projects using various grants, including the Community Initiatives Program grant available through the Province of Alberta. However, the Facility Services Business Unit is unable to apply for grants individually and must seek partners to access grant funding.



Objective

Create sustainable sources of funding to support ongoing efforts to retrofit existing publicly owned facilities.



Considerations

- In order to achieve goals for a more accessible environment, alternative and sustainable funding sources are required.
- Business Units must collaborate early in the design process to identify opportunities to improve accessibility in publicly owned facilities that the Facility Services Business Unit will ultimately operate and maintain, in order to avoid costly retrofits in the future.
- Partnerships are required with local service organizations to better understand need and to identify and leverage grant funding opportunities.
- The City should explore and source non-traditional and sustainable forms of funding to support accessibility retrofits in City owned facilities that could include social impact bonds, a public philanthropy drive for both individual and corporate support, user fees or special taxation.



Business Unit Actions

1. The Facility Services Business Unit should build internal and external partnerships, through the Accessibility Think Tank (ATT), to better understand need, capacity and availability of potential grant funding for accessibility retrofit projects. Possible partners

could include lessees of public facilities (e.g.: Girl Guides), local community (Seniors' Centres and Organizations) and social organizations, private foundations, etc. These community organizations may have capacity and the ability to access funding for their programs that are otherwise unavailable to the Facility Services Business Unit. Since lessees have a vested interest in the use of municipal facilities, the Facility Services Business Unit, with the help of other Business Units such as Recreation & Culture, could partner in order to make improvements to leased spaces that benefit the partnering organization and others.

2. The Mobility/Accessibility Working Group (MAWG) should consider, with the help and advice of other Business Units, the potential to establish an Accessibility Endowment Fund that could, over time, support accessibility improvements in the city.
3. The Facility Services Business Unit should collaborate with other Business Units to seek Federal funding and continue to leverage opportunities to complete accessibility projects as part of larger capital projects.



Collaboration

Lead Team	Supporting Teams	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAWG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Services • Parks • Planning & Development • Real Estate & Land Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation & Culture • Transit • Transportation • Urban Construction



Possible External Partnerships

- Local community organizations who are lessees of municipal facilities.
- Support Service Agencies.
- Seniors' Centres and Seniors' organizations.
- Explore potential to collaborate with external partners to access funding opportunities for accessibility retrofits and upgrades.



Time Frame

- Ongoing.



Financial Considerations

- Additional funding and/or staff resources may be required to support MAWG and Facility Services staff in building relationships with local organizations, identifying relevant alternative funding sources and preparing joint funding applications.

B. Ensure City Assets are Accessible for All Abilities



As accessibility considerations are incorporated into City assets, including parks and playgrounds, roads and sidewalks, public buildings, transit and other city-owned facilities, there is recognition that much of the focus has historically been on one type of user: people who use wheelchairs. The City wishes to broaden its vision for accessibility beyond just mobility, to accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities including those with vision, hearing and cognitive impairments so that everyone can enjoy the City's many parks, streets, plazas and other facilities.



Objective

Ensure the needs of all are considered in designing the physical environment.



Considerations

- Many of the accessibility features we see today within the built environment were created based on wheelchair dimensions and requirements.
- A broader perspective and understanding is required to consider the experience of those with vision, hearing and cognitive challenges.
- Principle 1 of the 7 Principles of Universal Design is Equitable Use where the design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. Guidelines include:
 - » Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not;
 - » Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users;
 - » Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users; and
 - » Make the design appealing to all users.
- New advancements are continually being developed to enable those with vision, hearing and cognitive impairments to access the world around them. Ongoing attention is required to evaluate technological advancements and to determine what applications work best in the Lethbridge context.
- External partnerships provide the City with access to specialized expertise and lived experience that can help the City evaluate current conditions, test design solutions and implement change. Partnerships can also provide exposure to grant and other funding opportunities that the City may otherwise be unable to access.



Business Unit Actions

1. Use Universal Design principles and the Mobility Accessibility Facility Design Guide document to design parks, public spaces, streetscapes, community services and other public facilities that are equitable, flexible and intuitive to use. The Universal Design principles can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of existing and planned parks and public spaces within the city to ensure they are accessible to everyone, regardless of ability.
2. Incorporate Universal Design principles into design standards that guide the design and construction of new and retrofit city spaces and facilities.
3. Raise awareness within the design and development industry about the significance of Universal Design by incorporating Universal Design principles into relevant policy and guiding documents and conducting regular learning sessions and simulation training with the design and construction industry.
4. Engage with local Support Service Agencies and stakeholders with lived experience, through the ATT, to solicit feedback on progress to date. Regular engagement will enable Business Units to gather direct feedback from users and help build relationships with local organizations and stakeholders.
5. Connect with local organizations and stakeholders with lived experience, through the ATT, to stay up to date on technological advancements to ensure that design responses continue to address the changing needs of users.



Collaboration

Lead Team	Supporting Teams	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAWG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks • Transportation • Urban Construction • Recreation & Culture • Transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning & Development • Facility Services • Real Estate & Land Development



Possible External Partnerships

- Support Service Agencies.
- Seniors' Centres and Seniors' organizations.



Time Frame

- Ongoing.



Financial Considerations

- Utilize existing operation and capital improvement programs.

C. Assess Current Conditions (Accessibility Audits)



The City of Lethbridge is responsible for managing and maintaining all publicly owned assets including sidewalks, parks and open spaces, recreation facilities, and civic spaces and facilities on behalf of the residents of Lethbridge. This responsibility also includes creating a physical environment that is inclusive and accessible for everyone – residents and visitors alike. The City has already taken steps towards making mobility and accessibility improvements. In order to continue the momentum, Business Units identified accessibility audits as an important next step to understand the state of existing assets in order to accurately plan for future needs within a limited budget.



Objective

Evaluate current condition of all major public facilities and city-owned infrastructure to better understand the extent of the challenge, inform project prioritization, appropriate business integration and long-term capital planning.



Considerations

- The Accessibility Audit can:
 - » Provide a clear assessment of existing conditions for all aspects of the built environment that impact accessibility.
 - » Identify gaps between current state and all relevant building codes and accessibility standards.
 - » Identify gaps between current state and ideal universal design.
 - » Determine resources required to improve infrastructure.
 - » Prioritize projects based on urgency and on breadth of impact.
 - » The City has already initiated Accessibility Audits for all city-owned facilities and more than 20 public parks.
 - » Opportunity to partner with other Business Units.
 - » Opportunity to engage those in the community with lived experience to support the audit process to better understand and identify what is working or not working.



Business Unit Actions

1. Establish integrated team representing various business units to lead accessibility audit exercise.
2. Secure consulting team to work with the City team to undertake the audits.
3. Work with the consultant to confirm evaluation criteria.

4. Complete audits and summarize results highlighting primary areas of concern.
5. Complete order of magnitude cost estimates to undertake necessary improvements.



Collaboration

Lead Team

- MAWG

Supporting Teams

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks • Facility Services • Real Estate & Land Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Construction • Transportation • Transit |
|--|---|



Possible External Partnerships

- Access the expertise and experience of those in Lethbridge who are currently living with disabilities, through the ATT, to solicit feedback on current conditions.
- Explore potential to collaborate with external partners to access funding opportunities for accessibility retrofits and upgrades.
- Engage consulting expertise with accessibility audit experience
- Connect appropriate consulting expertise with local post-secondary institutions (e.g.: Lethbridge College, University of Lethbridge) to build capacity and expertise in local institutions to evaluate accessibility of public facilities and to provide learning opportunities for students to build understanding of the field of accessibility.



Time Frame

- Short Term (0-3 Years) for priority audits with other audits completed over the long-term as budgets and resources allow.



Financial Considerations

- Use existing operation and capital improvement programs to advance audits.
- Confirm base budgets for accessibility.
- Explore potential to utilize government grants to undertake Accessibility Audits.
- Consider work/study partnership programs with local post-secondary institutions to build local expertise and capacity.
- Consider cost sharing arrangements through Joint-Use Agreements with School Boards to fund Accessibility Audits.

D. Enhance External Communication & Engagement



The City of Lethbridge has been active building relationships with individuals with lived experience and local agencies and organizations connected to accessibility for several years. This deliberate approach was reinforced through the MAMP process where three stakeholder meetings were held to better understand the mobility and accessibility challenges Lethbridge residents face and to solicit feedback on how best to address these challenges going forward. Through these and other engagements the expertise and insight of local organizations and those with lived experience was clearly demonstrated. The City is keen to continue to build these relationships going forward.

The City also recognizes that any desired change to the physical environment requires the cooperation of the local design and development industry. Additional communication with the local design and development industry will be required to ensure there is a common understanding regarding the City's motivation to improve mobility and accessibility in Lethbridge and the corresponding expectations that the City has for the design and development industry to help achieve those objectives.



Objective

To enhance communications with individuals with lived experience, supporting agencies and the design and development industry to confirm desired outcomes and to clarify the roles that each can play to achieve those outcomes.



Considerations

- Valuable insight and expertise exists in the local community related to mobility and accessibility.
- May require external access to specific universal design expertise.
- The City has started to meet with local organizations and agencies who support those with mobility and accessibility challenges to better understand their needs and to seek their insight and perspective.
- The local design and development industry are key drivers and partners in building a more accessible Lethbridge.
- Additional and ongoing communication and engagement is required to understand and discuss the industry's concerns, insights and ideas on how to improve mobility in the City.



Business Unit Actions

1. Develop a comprehensive Communications and Engagement Strategy with the City's Communications Business Unit to:
 - » Determine how best to share the MAMP with interested stakeholders, including the general public, and to keep them informed about progress made and upcoming opportunities for involvement.
 - » Consider how to engage with local non-profit organizations to learn from each other, to test ideas and approaches and to continue to create greater awareness about the importance of accessibility to the health of our community.
 - » Determine how best to reach out and partner with the local design and development industry to share the MAMP, the City's vision for improved accessibility, Principles of Universal Design and how to work together going forward to achieve common outcomes.
 - » Consider establishing an annual Accessibility Awareness Week or Day as an opportunity to publicly reaffirm the City's vision for accessibility, share knowledge, provide public education on accessibility, highlight successful accessibility initiatives, and communicate future accessibility projects.
 - » Regularly share information on accessibility improvements and initiatives that have been completed or are underway at community events.
 - » Establish regular communications on accessibility requirements and updates with the development industry associations.
 - » Develop broad communication and feedback protocols for externally sharing information about new initiatives, standards, and requirements tied to accessibility.
2. Consider developing an online mapping tool, similar to the GIS based system used through the public engagement process, to allow residents to "pin" areas of concern on a digital map for City staff to review and consider. This mapping tool could also be used to express appreciation for resident feedback, communicate anticipated action and timing, and track improvements and overall progress.



Collaboration

Lead Team

- MAWG

Supporting Teams

- Communications
- Community Engagement



Possible External Partnerships

- Use the ATT as a sounding board and a potential connection to various external organizations and agencies.



Time Frame

- Short Term (0-3 Years).



Financial Considerations

- Additional funding to support the implementation of Key Actions is not anticipated.

E. Develop Consistent Mobility/Accessibility Guidelines & Standards



Stakeholders with mobility or accessibility challenges shared how they need to plan their day based on how accessible the physical environment that they will be travelling to and through is. Design consistency was raised as a significant issue for those residents living with mobility or accessibility challenges. When design elements associated with intersection treatment, washroom layout, bus stops, sidewalk curb drops and other accessibility treatments differ significantly, it can be difficult to anticipate, interpret and utilize safely and comfortably, especially for those with vision loss. Consistent design features give users confidence and comfort in moving through a space or using a particular facility because they understand how it functions and have experienced it elsewhere in the community. The City is committed to creating a physical environment that is accessible for all, is familiar, intuitive and easy to understand for those with mobility or accessibility challenges.

Design standards are a tool that both the public and private sector can use to achieve consistent design outcomes by describing in detail how a particular accessibility feature should be designed and constructed. Design standards will articulate design details including the maximum grade change for curb drop, detectable warning surface depth and orientation, pathway width, table overhang distance to accommodate wheelchair user, crosswalk signal location and height, minimum door widths, and others to ensure a consistent and accessible physical environment.

However, not all design elements can or need to be standardized. In some cases, design guidelines are required to clearly articulate design intent, while remaining flexible to accommodate a variety of design approaches, given the unique site circumstances, state of innovation, or lack of proven best practice. For example, an adult-sized change table is not absolutely required for every washroom in a City facility. The intended use of the specific facility should be considered, and the availability of another public building in close proximity with this feature could also be considered an adequate alternative.

The City needs to proactively articulate its accessibility objectives to the design and construction industry in order to build greater awareness, understanding of the why and buy in for implementation when requirements might exceed current building code.



Objective

Develop Lethbridge specific and consistent mobility and accessibility guidelines and standards to create predictability in the physical environment for users.



Considerations

- Design consistency gives those with mobility or accessibility challenges the confidence to navigate the physical environment comfortably.
- Design Standards are required to achieve specific and consistent design outcomes.
- Design Guidelines are required when the design outcome is clear but there are numerous design approaches to achieve the desired outcome.
- Regardless of best efforts, the City cannot create an accessible physical environment alone. Implementation will require ongoing communication and collaboration with design and development consultants and contractors to achieve the desired outcomes.
- Consistency in bus stop and waiting area design will improve user experience by creating increased familiarity with the transit system and associated infrastructure. Creating a sense of familiarity and comfort may decrease fear and increase transit usage for those with mobility and accessibility challenges.
- User experience and Universal Design Principles should be of primary importance when considering potential changes or developing guidelines for the design of parks and open spaces.
- Accessibility standards should be developed for each existing park classification following the completion of the accessibility audits.
- It will take time to retrofit all the accessibility features within the City. Prioritization is required to ensure deliberate, efficient and strategic implementation of accessibility features.
- Ongoing and consistent communication and knowledge sharing is required with the design and construction industry to ensure they understand the City's:
 - » Motivation to improve accessibility;
 - » Expectations of the industry; and
 - » Willingness to hear any feedback that could help achieve common objectives.
- The Urban Construction Business Unit maintains design standards for development, manages right-of-way assignments and interfaces with new development in Lethbridge. Urban Construction can facilitate updates of the municipal design standards to achieve the City's accessibility vision.



Business Unit Actions

1. Work with Business Units to develop the Universal Accessibility Design Guide which is a consolidated document containing both design standards and guidelines that must be adhered to when designing or building within the City of Lethbridge. The Accessibility Design Guide will be a resource that City staff and design and construction professionals use to implement appropriate accessibility features in their projects.

2. Collaborate with other Business Units to hold learning sessions or workshops with private sector partners in the design and construction industry to communicate the City's vision and intent for accessibility in Lethbridge. Use these sessions to ensure that the development industry is aware of and understands how to use the Accessibility Design Guide.
3. Use the Accessibility Design Guide as a reference when evaluating Development and Building Permit applications and when conducting final inspections of the built product.
4. Establish consistent design guidelines and/or standards that could include the following criteria:

Accessible bus stops:

- » Location of bus stop entrance.
- » Size and orientation of landing pad.
- » Location of grab bars and handles.
- » Location, orientation and type of seating.
- » Lighting and visibility.
- » Digital or auditory signals for next bus and route number.
- » Design consistency across the city.
- » Tactile/high-vis indicators at bus stop locations.

Intersections:

- » Location and height of crosswalk signal on signal pole.
- » Curb drop location, width, slope, and orientation.
- » Detectable warning surface treatment.
- » Auditory cues.
- » Lighting.
- » Follow CSA B651-18 or similar standard.

Parks:

- » Maximum pathway grade.
- » Minimum pathway width.
- » Pathway connections to parking.
- » Well marked and lit wayfinding signage.
- » Accessible seating, eating areas and other site furniture.
- » Proximity to public washrooms.
- » Pathway surface treatment and edge protection/treatment.
- » Playground equipment, surfacing and colour contrast treatments.
- » Playground accessibility design criteria considerations (i.e. CSA standards).
- » Lighting.
- » Materials.

5. Consider pilot projects to test accessibility criteria and features that best suit users. A pilot project will allow for evaluation of a possible solution without fully investing in the solution. It will allow for customization or modifications to the solution as needed. The lead Business Unit should solicit feedback from users, including the ATT, to refine the design solution and inform future initiatives.
6. Ensure regular communication and participation in external partner workshops to educate the development industry, changes to standards, receive feedback and make changes as necessary.



Collaboration

Lead Team	Supporting Teams	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MAWG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parks ● Facility Services ● Planning & Development ● Transit ● Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Real Estate & Land Development ● Recreation & Culture ● Urban Construction



Possible External Partnerships

- **BILD Lethbridge** – can provide a direct connection to potential partners in the design and construction industry.
- **Accessibility Think Tank** – engage ATT as a sounding board and to collect feedback on existing accessibility design features and to test potential new design guidelines and standards.
- **Support Service Agencies** – for perspective on accessibility features to help those with mobility, vision, hearing, or cognitive impairments.
- **Professional Consultants** – to act as lead authors or content contributors for the design guide document.
- **Seniors’ Centres** – to understand the accessibility challenges facing seniors.
- **School Boards** – work together to identify and address common mobility and accessibility challenges in and around Lethbridge schools.



Time Frame

- Short Term (0-3 Years).



Financial Considerations

- Explore potential to utilize government grants to develop the Universal Accessibility Design Guide and to test applicability through pilot projects.

F. Test Design Ideas Unique to Lethbridge



The City of Lethbridge is in a unique position of not only setting design standards to improve mobility and accessibility but also to test these design standards through its Real Estate and Land Development Business Unit. In collaboration with other City Business Units, the Real Estate and Land Development Business Unit has consistently demonstrated creativity and innovation by reintroducing rear lanes, introducing barrier-free facilities, creating outdoor tables that are wheelchair accessible, developing multi-age activity areas, leveraging government grants, and partnering with local organizations.

The Real Estate and Land Development Business Unit acts as an incubator or catalyst to new ideas in community design, to test applications and to monitor success to ensure they meet the City's unique physical context. Lessons learned at a small scale in developing parts of the City could help inform appropriate applications in the balance of the community and especially in the developed parts of the city.



Objective

To test the applicability and relevance of innovative design solutions to improve mobility and accessibility on a small scale prior to broad application across the city.



Considerations

- The Real Estate and Land Development Business Unit working with other City Business Units and local organizations can be a catalyst for testing various approaches and technologies to improve mobility and accessibility in the City of Lethbridge.
- Balancing innovation with risk management will be important moving forward.



Business Unit Actions

1. Continue to foster relationships with other City Business Units and partnering organizations to better understand new design approaches and technologies that may be relevant to the City of Lethbridge context.
2. Working with other City Business Units, monitor the effectiveness of implemented projects against the desired outcomes and objectives.
3. Continue to research national and international best practices.



Collaboration

Lead Team

- MAWG

Supporting Teams

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real Estate & Land Development • Parks • Facility Services • Planning & Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit • Transportation • Recreation & Culture • Urban Construction |
|--|---|



Possible External Partnerships

- Partnering with external organizations through the ATT who are fully aware and up to date on developing design approaches.



Time Frame

- Short Term (0-3 Years).



Financial Considerations

- Identify as part of the development costs.

G. Prioritize Planned Mobility & Accessibility Improvements



While many Business Units keep an inventory of existing physical assets, and their condition, the City also receives complaints that help identify accessibility issues in the community. The City tends to react and respond to the complaints, potentially at the expense of other initiatives. The need to be more proactive and prioritize accessibility investments was a comment consistently shared by a number of Business Units during the Business Unit Assessments. With accessibility needs at various scales identified across the city, it will be important to develop a strategy that provides a strong rationale for prioritizing projects that can support ongoing decision-making.



Objective

Create a comprehensive prioritization matrix with suitable criteria to help inform City investment and decision-making.



Considerations

- A coordinated and strategic approach is required to address mobility and accessibility improvements in a timely and deliberate manner.
- Business Units must work together to ensure project integration, efficiency and knowledge sharing.
- Mobility and Accessibility improvements generally fall into one of three categories:
 - » **Integrated project improvements** – mobility and accessibility improvements undertaken as part of another City infrastructure project (i.e. appropriate resurfacing of sidewalk following underground infrastructure replacement).
 - » **Planned improvements** – planned accessibility improvements that have been prioritized to meet known needs based on a set of criteria and deliberate decision-making.
 - » **Unanticipated improvements** – identified from resident complaints or resulting from unplanned events or incidents (i.e. broken sidewalk due to winter snow clearing).



Business Unit Actions

1. Develop a Prioritization Matrix as a tool to facilitate discussion between Business Units and the ATT in order to prioritize planned mobility and accessibility improvements. Although specific criteria will be developed by the Business Units, the Prioritization Matrix could consider the following criteria:
 - » Level of need and/or impact (i.e. serving significant population, improve safety, etc.);
 - » Proximity to:
 - Major bus routes;
 - Employment areas;
 - Community services, facilities and amenities;
 - Educational facilities;
 - Key pedestrian corridors;
 - Cultural facilities; and
 - Parks and open spaces.
 - » Current condition of the asset;
 - » Potential integration or connection to other City projects;
 - » Retrofit or new construction;
 - » Ease of implementation;
 - » Project cost;
 - » Applicability and availability of alternative forms of funding (i.e. government grants, private foundation grants, etc.);
 - » Potential partnership opportunities (i.e. developer, community association, service organization, etc.); and
 - » Other criteria.
2. Consider developing an online mapping tool, like the GIS based system used through the public engagement process, to allow residents to “pin” areas of concern on a digital map for City staff to review and consider. This mapping tool could also be used to express appreciation for resident feedback, communicate anticipated action and timing, and track improvements and overall progress.
3. Track planned and actual budgets to inform future investments and document lessons learned that could be applied proactively to future projects.



Collaboration

Lead Team

- MAWG

Supporting Teams

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Services • Parks • Planning & Development • Real Estate & Land Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation & Culture • Transit • Transportation • Urban Construction |
|--|---|



Possible External Partnerships

- ATT to act as a sounding board in developing the criteria used in the Prioritization Matrix.



Time Frame

- Short Term (0-3 Years).



Financial Considerations

- Additional funding to support the implementation of Key Actions is not anticipated.

H. Collaborate to Minimize Winter City Challenges



With significant swings in winter temperatures and more than 132 cm of snowfall annually, the City of Lethbridge is a winter city. Winter conditions impact all residents, regardless of mobility, in all areas of the city. Both stakeholders and Business Unit staff consistently identified winter realities and winter conditions as a challenge when accessing Transit services, pathways and parks. Feedback indicated that Transit users experience difficulties when getting to and from bus stops, usually due to snow and ice cover, and that bus stops are often not properly cleared due to the logistical challenges of aligning snow removal priorities. Residents also expressed frustration when trying to navigate snow covered sidewalks in residential areas.



Objective

Enable Lethbridge residents and visitors experiencing mobility challenges to maintain accessibility during the winter months.



Considerations

- Snow clearing responsibilities span private land owners and multiple Business Units: Transportation, Parks, Regulatory Services and Transit.
- Transportation is responsible for clearing roads, Transit is responsible for clearing bus stops, and Parks is responsible for clearing pathways.
- Landowners are responsible for clearing snow off sidewalks next to their property and Regulatory Services is responsible for enforcing Snow Removal Bylaw requirements.
- Transit currently engages a contractor to undertake snow clearing for all 600 bus stops.
- Bus shelters are managed by a third party.
- With responsibilities shared across three Business Units, and without coordination of priorities between Business Units, bus stops can be cleared but then covered with snow cleared from adjacent roads, making them difficult to navigate.
- A coordinated approach between Business Units is required to deliver efficient and timely snow clearing services to roads, sidewalks, pathways and bus stops.
- Snow clearing expenses and budget implications can vary based on weather conditions.
- Even if bus stops are cleared, residents with mobility challenges may not be able to navigate snow- or ice-covered sidewalks to access the bus stops.
- Potential to improve overall pedestrian connectivity by clearing key portions of sidewalks adjacent to bus stops.
- Prioritization may be required to focus snow clearing efforts.



Business Unit Actions

1. Collaborate with other business units to develop a consistent, efficient and appropriate approach and method for snow clearing. Consideration should be given to:
 - » Potential changes in Business Unit roles and responsibilities;
 - » Consolidation of services;
 - » Increased communication between Business Units to ensure appropriate timing and sequence of clearing between responsible Business Units;
 - » Increased public education around the importance of snow removal to enable those with mobility challenges to undertake daily activities; and
 - » Increasing the enforcement and penalties for failure to comply with the Snow Removal Bylaw.
2. Work with private service providers to explore opportunities to improve service delivery, efficiency, timing and area coverage.
3. Work with responsible Business Units to explore possible alternatives to improve snow clearing around and within close proximity to bus stops:
 - » Adjust the scope of work to include portions of adjacent sidewalks that are providing essential linkages to important community services and amenities (i.e. hospital, schools, senior's facilities, employment areas, etc.);
 - » Secure external partnerships with other contractors or providers;
 - » Emphasize and communicate the importance of neighbourhood snow clearing programs;
 - » Consider alternative forms of service delivery including partnerships with as-and-when needed employment providers, student employment services, and others; or
 - » Use pilot projects to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of various approaches.
4. Undertake GIS spatial analysis to determine how to maximize snow clearing operations by considering criteria that could include:
 - » Proximity to Transit stops;
 - » Level of sidewalk connectivity;
 - » Residential density;
 - » Prioritize areas with populations that are more likely to walk (e.g. seniors' facilities);
 - » Proximity to key employment, retail, educational, recreational and institutional services;
 - » Important pedestrian linkages; and
 - » Other criteria.
5. Revisit existing snow clearing priority hierarchy for pedestrian routes.



Collaboration

Lead Team

- MAWG

Supporting Teams

- Transportation
- Parks
- Transit
- Regulatory Services



Possible External Partnerships

- Collaborate with City snow clearing staff and private snow clearing operators to explore opportunities to improve coverage, efficiency and cost.
- Engage stakeholders with lived experience to document typical travel patterns highlighting key and common destinations.



Time Frame

- Short Term (0-3 Years).



Financial Considerations

- Operational budget adjustments may be required to support expanded snow clearing services.
- Explore alternative funding sources, including government grants, sponsorships and cost sharing through partnerships to support pilot projects.

I. Maintain Accessibility During Construction Detours



Detours for pedestrians are required during certain types of construction work, whether undertaken by the public or private sector. In the recent past, it's shown to be a challenge to maintain intuitive and direct connections for pedestrians through construction areas. Clear expectations are required to ensure that mobility plans are provided to maintain accessibility during construction periods.



Objective

To maintain safe and accessible pedestrian connections through construction zones.



Considerations

- Appropriate communication is required to ensure residents are aware of upcoming construction and that alternative accessible pedestrian routes are clearly signed, lit and maintained.
- Construction sites and their surroundings can change quickly through a project. Communication plans and pedestrian detours should be flexible and able to adapt quickly to the changing needs of the project and pedestrians.
- The City of Lethbridge should demonstrate by example how to best communicate, establish and maintain accessible pedestrian detour routes.



Business Unit Actions

1. Establish standards for contractors completing work on or impacting pedestrian facilities to advise the City and public on project timing, impacts ahead and ensure a clearly marked, safe and accessible detour is provided for pedestrians.
2. Require applicant to demonstrate in their Detour Plan how accessibility will be maintained during construction.
3. Work with external partners and contractors to explore piloting a “concierge service”, where an on-site worker is trained to recognize members of the public who might need assistance navigating through construction (e.g.: young kids, seniors, someone with a visual impairment, etc.), and is responsible for guiding the user through a construction detour.



Collaboration

Lead Team

- MAWG

Supporting Teams

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Facility Services • Parks • Planning & Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real Estate & Land Development • Recreation & Culture • Transit • Urban Construction |
|--|---|



Possible External Partnerships

- ATT to function as a sounding board to support development of standards for contractors.



Time Frame

- Short Term (0-3 Years).



Financial Considerations

- Additional funding to support the implementation of Key Actions is not anticipated.

J. Ensure a Seamless Interface between Public & Private Spaces



In the 2017-2021 City Council Strategic Plan, City Council addressed accessibility and creating pedestrian friendly commercial areas, including the downtown. However, concerns were consistently raised through the MAMP process from both users and City staff that physical connections were challenging or missing completely between public corridors and spaces (i.e. sidewalks and bus stops) and private spaces (i.e. business entrances). A number of specific locations were cited in the city where users were unable to get from the bus stop located on a public sidewalk to the front door of a private retail business. Users expressed frustration that they were unable to navigate this gap due to significant grade changes, inappropriate sidewalk or pathway materials and/or unanticipated obstacles (e.g. no accessible sidewalk or curb drops).



Objective

Achieve a seamless interface and access between public and private spaces in the city.



Considerations

- The City should be more proactive in clearly sharing their expectations with the local development and design industry to build a common understanding of mobility and accessibility expectations on any site in the city.
- The Planning and Development Business Unit is responsible for evaluating development applications and implementing Land Use Bylaw mobility and accessibility requirements to ensure applicants and developers follow City regulations and implement the development according to approved plans.
- Additional policy and regulatory tools may be required to ensure there is a clear understanding of how pedestrian circulation is going to take place on site and how appropriate connections are going to be made between private and public lands.
- Increased collaboration will be required between Business Units to ensure projects are built according to approved plans.
- Application of Universal Design principles allows everyone the opportunity to contribute to society and the economy.



Business Unit Actions

1. Require development applicants to illustrate on the site plan or on the Mobility/Accessibility site plan how people will conveniently, intuitively and easily access and move within the site and how patrons will move between adjacent public facilities (e.g. sidewalk, pathway, bus stop, etc.) and private spaces (e.g. front door, outdoor seating areas, patios, etc.).
2. The MAWG will collaborate with other relevant Business Units to develop a sample Mobility/Accessibility site plan to clearly illustrate expectations.
3. Planning and Development Business Unit, in collaboration with other Business Units, to use Universal Design Principles as criteria from which to evaluate the appropriateness of the pedestrian circulation proposed in the site plan or Mobility/Accessibility site plan.
4. Planning and Development Business Unit to monitor the effectiveness of the site plans and implemented accessibility features and report back on lessons learned to the MAWG.



Collaboration

Lead Team	Supporting Teams	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAWG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real Estate & Land Development • Transportation • Transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Construction • Facility Services • Planning & Development



Possible External Partnerships

- Work with the Design and Development Industry to communicate the MAMP vision and reinforce how important their role is in achieving accessibility improvements in the city.



Time Frame

- Medium Term (4-7 years).



Financial Considerations

- The development applicant will be responsible for any costs associated with preparing the Mobility/Accessibility site plan as part of their development submission package.

K. Explore an Accessible Door to Accessible Door Transportation Service



During engagement, the ability to access on-demand door-to-door service for those with mobility issues was identified as a gap within the transit and transportation system. Although Access-A-Ride (AAR) provides a valuable service, it typically requires advanced booking to secure a trip. Users expressed frustration that last minute trips for groceries, appointments or other travel requirements are not possible, given an over-burdened Access-A-Ride system and limited accessible taxis in the city. This reality leaves users to secure rides with family or friends or to not travel at all. The Transit Business Unit recognizes the challenge and is willing to explore alternatives.



Objective

- Facilitate with partners the feasibility of establishing an accessible door to accessible door 24/7 service.



Considerations

- Lack of essential and convenient alternatives to Access-A-Ride contributes to the overburdened Access-A-Ride system.
- Better understand any existing barriers that are preventing the local taxi industry from providing an appropriate door-to-door accessible and essential service.
- Facilitating a 24/7 accessible vehicle service with partners may divert some of the demand and strain on the Access-A-Ride system.
- The City of Lethbridge completed a Transit Master Plan in 2017 which identified a number of recommendations related to the Access-A-Ride service including:
 - » Review and consider revisions to eligibility requirements;
 - » Establish a “no-show” process and implications;
 - » Explore cost sharing options; and
 - » Evaluate the effectiveness of large vehicles.
- Municipalities use different incentives to encourage operation of accessible vehicles. Examples include, providing an annual monetary incentive to taxi operators based on certain criteria or subsidizing taxi services (City would pay portion of fare) for qualified Access-A-Ride users who use an accessible taxi service.



Business Unit Actions

1. Review and act on recommendations from the Transit Master Plan to enhance existing operations by:
 - » Revising eligibility requirements;
 - » Developing a “no-show” process;
 - » Exploring cost sharing options; and
 - » Evaluating current fleet performance.
2. Explore the potential for other stakeholders to provide an accessible taxi service, and to explore together how those obstacles could be addressed.
3. Meet with representatives from relevant agencies to better understand their service, capacity and ability to provide broader service to those with mobility challenges beyond participating seniors’ organizations.
4. Explore possible service alternatives and opportunities for cost sharing (capital and/or operational) and partnership with private partners in order to provide convenient, accessible and viable door-to-door service.
5. Recruit travel trainees before applying to AAR.
6. Clearly define and educate the service provided by AAR.
7. Explore an independent medical professional (e.g. Occupational Therapist or Physical Therapist) to complete an interview and/or an assessment and recommend the best transportation option to fit the applicant’s needs.
8. Case by case interviews of AAR applicants – opportunity to educate on the best service to suit their needs.
9. Education and marketing of Accessible Conventional Transit (Fixed Routing).



Collaboration

Lead Team

- MAWG

Supporting Teams

- Transit



Possible External Partnerships

- Collaborate with private transportation service operators (e.g.: taxi operators) to explore alternative service delivery and cost-recovery options.



Time Frame

- Medium Term (4-7 years).



Financial Considerations

- Target zero-impact by realizing an offsetting financial savings due to reduced pressure on Access-A-Ride system in balance against any subsidies required to incentivize private operators to increase accessibility option.

L. Manage Access-A-Ride Demand



Access-A-Ride (AAR) is a City of Lethbridge service for people who are unable to use the regular public transit service with safety and dignity. AAR is a shared-ride public transportation “accessible door to door” service. AAR includes more than **1450 registered active clients** in Lethbridge. The service includes 21 buses and provides upwards of **700 trips on a regular operational day** serving more than 15 Senior Complexes, 17 schools, 6 day-programs, and 1 dialysis program. Booking and scheduling decisions are made to optimize services for as many customers as possible. The costs of the service are largely covered by the City of Lethbridge with a smaller portion coming from client fares.

The use and capacity of the AAR system was consistently identified as an area for improvement by both Transit Business Unit staff as well as stakeholders using the AAR system. Stakeholders consistently expressed frustration with the service suggesting that the service is often overwhelmed by demand, inconvenient for same-day or last-minute travel needs, and used by some who could otherwise use the standard city-wide transit system.



Objective

Ensure Access -A-Ride is a convenient, efficient and viable transportation service for those with mobility challenges.



Considerations

- Ensure that the right people are using the appropriate transit services.
- Difficult to accommodate same-day or last-minute travel demands.
- City Transit runs low floor, kneeling accessible buses that include on-board stability support for wheelchair users and stop annunciation.



Business Unit Actions

1. Increase communication and education to City transit users to help them better understand how to use the system and who Access-A-Ride is designed to serve.
2. Increase training and education for transit staff and operators to understand how best to support riders with mobility/accessibility challenges.
3. Connect with partners and organizations representing people with mobility challenges and other disabilities to offer “transit training” to their clientele to ensure they understand the transit options available to them.
4. Explore options such as a fare review to deter overuse of the system.
5. Access-A-Ride to review eligibility criteria while considering the Transit Master Plan’s recommendations.



Collaboration

Lead Team

- MAWG

Supporting Teams

- Transit



Possible External Partnerships

- **Stakeholders with Lived Experience, Seniors' Centres and Seniors' organizations, and Support Service Agencies** – provide transit education sessions and connect with stakeholders to understand usage of the system and collect feedback on possible solutions or alternatives to the Access-a-Ride system.
- **Public** – create opportunities for public engagement and learning sessions.



Time Frame

- Medium Term (4-7 years).



Financial Considerations

- Explore opportunities to increase revenue (i.e. user fees), or reduce costs through improved AAR performance, to offset any additional staff time required for training purposes or other transit accessibility improvements.

M. Monitor & Enforce Mobility & Accessibility Regulations



Mobility and accessibility regulations were recently added to the Land Use Bylaw. The regulations describe design expectations pertaining to pathway connections, grade changes, parking lot design, curb ramps, and other design features. The Regulations also require development applicants clearly illustrate on the site plan or a separate Mobility/Accessibility site plan how the accessibility requirements are being met. Although these regulations have been successfully embedded in the Land Use Bylaw, the responsibility remains with the City to enforce the requirements of the bylaw and ensure that the regulations are upheld in order to achieve the desired results on the ground.

As with all other parts of the Land Use Bylaw, the mobility and accessibility regulations should be reviewed regularly to assess their effectiveness and determine if any adjustments are required. Standards and best practices in the field of accessibility and universal design are continually evolving and municipal regulations should reflect any changes.



Objective

Monitor and enforce mobility and accessibility regulations.



Considerations

- Ensure development applicants are aware of and understand the mobility and accessibility regulations found within the Land Use Bylaw.
- While there is regulatory support for mobility and accessibility in the Land Use Bylaw, the regulations must be enforced by the City to be effective.
- Consider how to communicate and navigate differences in municipal, provincial, and federal standards for accessibility in the built form.
- Ensure the Planning and Development Business Unit collaborates with other Business Units to develop, implement, monitor and amend mobility and accessibility regulations.



Business Unit Actions

1. Ensure that Development Officers and Bylaw Enforcement Officers understand the City's vision to improve accessibility within the community as articulated in the MAMP and that they understand why the City is making these investments and their role in ensuring implementation on the ground.
2. Use pre-application meetings with applicants to clarify accessibility expectations.
3. Encourage mobility and accessibility policies to be included in other city planning

documents including Area Structure Plans, Area Redevelopment Plans and Outline Plans.

4. Collaborate with other Business Units to consistently communicate accessibility vision to the design, development and construction industry.
5. Engage with stakeholders with lived experience, through the ATT, to assess the impact of mobility and accessibility policies and regulations and identify amendments where relevant.
6. Consider third party oversight and expertise on an ongoing basis.
7. Collaborate with the MAWG and other Business Units to research and understand best practices in accessibility and universal design.
8. Proactively solicit feedback from applicants and developers on the implementation of mobility and accessibility policies and regulations and work together to amend where necessary.



Collaboration

Lead Team

- MAWG

Supporting Teams

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Facility Services | • Transit |
| • Parks | • Transportation |
| • Real Estate & Land Development | • Urban Construction |
| • Recreation & Culture | • Planning & Development |



Possible External Partnerships

- » **Design and Construction Industry** – work with Industry, including professional associations (APPI, BILD Lethbridge), to share mobility and accessibility objectives, to clarify the development process and application expectations and to solicit feedback on outcomes.
- » **Accessibility Think Tank** – to act as sounding board on potential regulatory and/or policy changes and to solicit feedback on success of outcomes.



Time Frame

- Ongoing.



Financial Considerations

- Additional funding to support the implementation of Key Actions is not anticipated.





11. TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

The City of Lethbridge has access to a number of tools that can be used throughout the development process to:

- Raise awareness about the benefits of improved accessibility for all residents in the community;
- Develop policy to support informed capital project evaluation and decision-making;
- Confirm design intent while allowing flexible design approaches; and
- Ensure consistent physical outcomes.

Tool or Technique	Purpose	Scale
Municipal Development Plan (MDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a statutory plan that translates community goals into policy & guides decision-making. • Other policy & regulatory documents must be consistent with objectives of MDP. • Broadly guides land use, transportation systems, municipal services/facilities and growth patterns for the entire municipality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically applied at a city-wide scale.
Area Structure Plan (ASP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves as a guiding planning document that refines & implements MDP policy & establishes direction for the development of new neighbourhoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be applied at a community/neighbourhood scale.
Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a neighbourhood-based planning tool that is used to guide redevelopment efforts in established urban areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be applied at a community/neighbourhood scale.
Design Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulates design intent but provides design flexibility to meet intent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be applied at a city-wide, community, neighbourhood and site scale.

Application to mobility/accessibility

- Opportunity to demonstrate Council’s commitment to improving mobility and accessibility.
- Reinforce the importance of mobility and accessibility to the long-term success and functionality of the city.

When to Use in the Design and Development Process

- Broadly influences development site selection, municipal connectivity and service provision.
- Essential reference and consideration as part of any (re)development application.

- Provides guidance for new community development which is specific to a defined area.
- Provides policy direction to ensure mobility and accessibility aspirations are applied at a neighbourhood scale.

- Provides guidance for community-specific development sequencing, land uses, population density and the general location of major transportation routes and public utilities.

- Provides guidance for community redevelopment which is specific to a defined area.
- Provides policy direction to ensure mobility and accessibility aspirations are applied at a neighbourhood scale.

- Provides guidance for community-specific redevelopment which may include preserving/improving/rehabilitating/removing/constructing/replacing land and/or buildings, and establishing, improving or relocating roads, public utilities or other services.
- Acts as a guiding document for all redevelopment projects within the defined area.

- Best used when desired outcome is clear but design approach may vary.

- Essential reference and consideration as part of any (re)development application.
- Helps influence designs decisions and approach to (re)development.

Tool or Technique	Purpose	Scale
Design Standards / Accessibility Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as the rule book for design and construction of infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied to the design and construction of specific infrastructure.
Land Use Bylaw (LUB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translates the community's vision, goals, objectives, plans, and policies into how land is developed. The LUB establishes the various land use districts throughout the municipality and establishes rules within each. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be applied at a city-wide, community, neighbourhood and site scale.
Development Permit (DP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows a specific type of development on a specific parcel of land in the community to proceed provided it conforms with the LUB or any other relevant planning and development policies. Applicants generally are required to have a valid DP before applying for a building permit to construct the building or structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to specific buildings or structures and/or uses of land.
Building Permit (BP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates how a building or structure is constructed and ensures it is built according to appropriate codes. • Ensures that a building or structure is safe to occupy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to specific buildings or structures.

Application to mobility/accessibility

When to Use in the Design and Development Process

- Establishes expected designs for infrastructure such as light standards, road cross-sections, curb cuts, etc.

- Used in the detailed design process for either communities or sites, the design standards / accessibility standards set minimum expectations for infrastructure design and construction.
- Can be used for both public and private developments/infrastructure.
- The design standards / accessibility standards should influence the engineering design of developments.

- Establishes general rules for the entire municipality, identifies purpose and intent of certain areas and specific rules/regulations for implementation.
- The LUB can provide specific guidance for the implementation of accessibility infrastructure and regulations for its development.

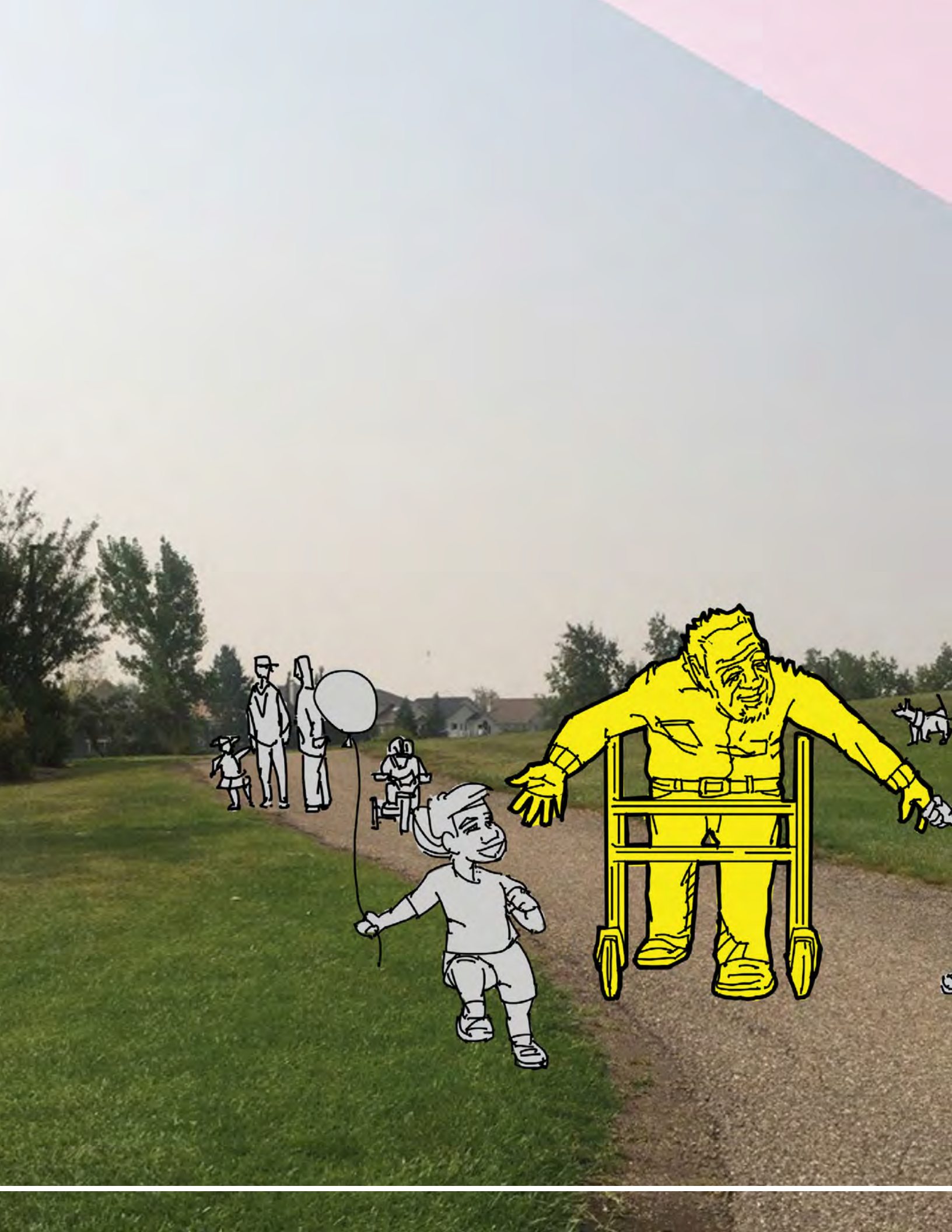
- The LUB acts as the book of rules and regulations to guide the implementation of policy.
- The LUB governs items such as enforcement, land use districts (zoning), building heights, yard setbacks, allowable uses, etc.

- The DP implements policy previously established in guiding documents.
- The DP demonstrates how mobility and accessibility guidelines and standards take physical form on a site.

- The DP is site-specific and provides the general permission to develop land for a specific use and/or building or structure.
- A DP is typically required before development can occur on a site.

- The BP will show how certain accessibility or mobility structures are constructed.

- The BP has the most fine-grain detail of building or structure design and construction. Amongst other items, it confirms construction method, materials, code-compliance and occupancy.





12.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The City of Lethbridge is responsible for the efficient and cost-effective delivery of services and programs to meet the diverse needs of its residents. Services and programs range from police, fire, water and sewer infrastructure, libraries, recreation facilities, public transit, roadways and sidewalks. The City of Lethbridge prepares and manages both a Capital Budget and an Operating Budget.

12.1 Capital Budget

The Capital Budget identifies required capital projects and provides a schedule and financing plan to accommodate one-time construction costs for these projects. The City of Lethbridge develops a ten-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Community, Transportation and Utility projects. The 2018-2027 CIP was approved by City Council for the years 2018-2021. The CIP covers the costs of design through implementation to operations and maintenance as well as potential funding sources including debt, offsite levies, Pay-As-You-Go financing and government grants.

City Council prioritizes projects based on a set of criteria that ranges from health and safety, to economic viability, well designed city and social impact. Although mobility and accessibility may fall indirectly under one or more existing criteria, the City may want to consider adding mobility and accessibility enhancement as a specific criterion from which to evaluate the appropriateness of a project for capital funding. This would reinforce the approach that every City project is an opportunity to enhance accessibility to give everyone the opportunity to participate in and contribute to our community.

12.2 Operating Budget

The City of Lethbridge practices multi-year operational budgeting. City Council deliberates and approves a new four-year operating budget every four years. In December 2018, City Council approved the 2019-2022 Operating Budget. The Operating Budget covers ongoing operating costs for services or programs such as police, fire, public transit, water and sewer, libraries, arenas, swimming pools and accessibility improvements. The Operating Budget for 2019 is approximately \$405 million.

12.3 Financing Tools

Implementing accessibility improvements in the city will require a long-term and ongoing financial commitment by City Council and the community. As described above, the City of Lethbridge currently funds infrastructure improvements through debt, Pay-As-You-Go financing and government grants. However, there are several other non-traditional tools and approaches to finance capital improvement projects that should be considered and evaluated.

- **Community Revitalization Levy**

A community revitalization levy (CRL) allows the City to redirect a portion of provincial tax revenues from a designated revitalization area and towards approved municipal expenditures that will have a direct role in facilitating redevelopment. The CRL provides a means to direct tax revenue increases that result from redevelopment into a fund for infrastructure improvements. This approach requires Provincial approval and is only relevant to areas of the community experiencing significant redevelopment pressure. Accessibility enhancements could be included in the infrastructure improvements but would not be the driver for this approach.

- **Density Bonusing**

Density bonusing allows the municipality to permit density, beyond what is currently allowed in the bylaw, in exchange for the provision of a community benefit that could include accessibility improvements. This is especially relevant in locations where additional density is in demand and is compatible with community planning policy.

- **Special Tax**

One approach to generate a significant cash infusion in support of accessibility improvements could be a short-term dedicated accessibility tax. The City of Lethbridge could collect a monthly Accessibility Improvement fee, in the range of \$2 to \$5 from residents and businesses to advance accessibility improvements across the city. This Accessibility Improvement fee would be applied to targeted, high profile and prioritized accessibility projects to generate the needed revenue, on a short-term basis, to take major steps towards improved accessibility in the city. This approach would require a strong communication strategy to ensure residents understood the rationale, were kept aware of progress and were part of evaluating the success of the outcomes on the ground.

- **Accessibility Grants**

For the purpose of this plan we will consider grants to be non-repayable payments from government to actors offering a solution to a societal problem, in this case at a federal or provincial level. Municipal governments could either facilitate or inform local non-profits of these grants or offer co-funding. An example of a relevant program would be [Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund](#), which the City of Lethbridge has utilized in the past.

The Province of Alberta runs the [Community Facility Enhancement Program](#). Although it does not consider municipal governments to be eligible applicants, the City could inform community non-profits about the program and offer co-funding.

Social Finance also offers a variety of tools and methods to manage money to solve societal problems, often by investing in or lending to non-profits, charities or social enterprises. The following social finance tools have potential application for municipal-level responses to accessibility gaps that can replace or leverage already constrained municipal budgets.

- **Philanthropy**

Philanthropic gifts are sometimes categorized as grants, but more specifically those that come from foundations, corporations or individuals. The individual donors are often motivated by personal experiences with living with disabilities or caring for people with disabilities. There is an array of private donors and foundations who donate funds to help address this area of need. Although a municipality might not solicit them directly for donations, an improved awareness of all the parties who are giving to local projects would allow the municipality to coordinate responses for greater effectiveness. One example of a corporate giving program specific to accessibility is [Canadian Tire's JumpStart program](#).

- **Social Impact Bonds (SIBs)**

SIBs are contracts with the public sector in which a commitment is made to pay for improved social outcomes that result in public sector savings. They originated in the UK to reward privately operated correctional facilities for implementing programs to reduce the rate of re-offending and were quickly adopted in the USA to leverage private investments for an increasingly broad range of social interventions. This could be a powerful alternative finance tool but would be very challenging to manage for all but the largest municipalities. It could be made relevant, however, by cooperating with a group of municipalities across the region.

- **Impact Investing**

Impact investments are investments made into companies, organizations, and funds with the intention to generate social and environmental impact alongside a financial return. This category of investments has been growing exponentially over the past several years, and now allows social-purpose business to leverage funding from capital markets and private investors. Although impact investments have a variety of types (debt, equity, etc), one applicable example is a [Program-Related Investment \(PRI\)](#). Foundations in Canada may legally use a PRI to give a loan or provide funding for a lease of real estate using funds in its endowment if certain conditions are met. This might be a useful tool that could be considered if there is a foundation which is willing to help but has already committed most of its grant funding to other projects.

- **Social Enterprise**

Social Enterprise has been given a wide range of definitions, but in its broader form it is an organization with social purpose which operates a business activity to further that purpose. Regardless of how it is defined, there are countless examples of social enterprises that operate to help address issues related to accessibility and inclusion. A municipality could use a variety of methods to promote or encourage social enterprise activities, such as offering physical space, tax incentives, or running a contest to encourage new social enterprise activity or a redeployment of effort to focus on your community or the need for improved accessibility. An example of such a program to stimulate social enterprise activity is [Urban Matters' Reframe Housing competition](#).

- **The City as Convener**

These social finance tools may require the City to play a convening role with other partners. The convening power of municipal governments should not be underestimated. Some of these tools require cooperation between private donors, investors, the other levels of government, and foundations. Lethbridge would have the ability to call these parties together and inform them of some of the tools that they might need to work together to obtain funding. Another role for the city could be to provide some stimulus or seed funding that could help mobilize other parties for a larger project. If seed funding is unavailable, other in-kind support such as use of city assets or donated time from municipal employees might be enough to unlock a greater effort.

12.4 Key Actions

1. Review the capital projects identified in the 10-year capital plan and assess their potential to accommodate accessibility improvements as part of an integrated project:
 - » Meet with Business Unit representatives to understand project scope and desired outcomes.
 - » Consider how the project scope could be altered to include site specific and broader accessibility improvements.
 - » Confirm budget implications and any potential savings due to project efficiencies.
 - » Summarize opportunities and challenges.
2. Explore alternative funding strategies, including those approaches mentioned above, to provide sustainable long-term funding to improve accessibility in the City of Lethbridge.
3. Establish relationships with external partners who may be interested in collaborating with the City of Lethbridge to help advance and fund mobility and accessibility improvements.
4. Consider best method or group of methods to raise the funding needed to complete accessibility upgrades quickly.
5. Consider the use of professional consultants to develop a funding strategy.

12.5 Lead Team

- Mobility/Accessibility Working Group (MAWG).

12.6 Time Frame

- MAWG to review 10-year capital plan projects within 1-2 years.
- MAWG to explore alternative funding strategies within 1-2 years.







13. IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

The City of Lethbridge has been active implementing accessibility improvements in the city for a number of years. Through this experience the City recognized the obstacles that exist for those with mobility challenges and initiated a comprehensive planning process that included best practices research with other municipalities focused on improving accessibility in their communities, significant stakeholder and public engagement with Lethbridge residents with lived experience and supporting local organizations, as well as direct interviews with City Business Units to better understand actions taken, lessons learned and future plans for accessibility improvements in their areas of influence.

- Short Term (0-3 years)
- Medium Term (4-7 years)
- Long Term (7+ years)

The table below was developed to bring clarity to tasks, roles, responsibilities and timelines.

Areas of Focus & Actions	Timing	Lead Group	Potential Partners	
			Internal	External
City Responsibilities & Commitments to Accessibility				
Administration to propose plan and budget to meet City Council goals	Next Budget Process	Senior Management Team	Mobility/Accessibility Working Group (MAWG)	
Council to approve budget through regular budget deliberations	Next Budget Process	City Council	Senior Management Team	
Increase Business Unit Communication and Collaboration				
Establish a digital platform to share learnings and best practices	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	
Develop outcomes-focused process to guide decision making	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	
Provide simulation training for key staff	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	Training Provider
Build External Partnerships				
Establish Accessibility Think Tank (ATT)	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	
Develop Communication Strategy to connect with external agencies and partners	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	Communications	
Provide user training for municipal facilities	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	
Areas of Focus				
A Seek Sustainable Funding for Facility Retrofits	Ongoing	MAWG	City Business Units	Accessibility Think Tank (ATT)
B Ensure City Assets are Accessible for All Abilities	Ongoing	MAWG	City Business Units	ATT

	Areas of Focus & Actions	Timing	Lead Group	Potential Partners	
				Internal	External
C	Assess Current Conditions (Accessibility Audits)	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	Specialist Consultant, ATT
D	Enhance External Communications & Engagement	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	Communications	ATT
E	Develop Consistent Mobility/Accessibility Guidelines & Standards	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	ATT
F	Test Design Ideas Unique to Lethbridge	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	ATT
G	Prioritize Planned Mobility & Accessibility Improvements	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	ATT
H	Collaborate to Minimize Winter City Challenges	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	Transit, Transportation & Parks	ATT & Private Contractors
I	Maintain Accessibility During Construction Detours	Short Term (0-3 years)	MAWG	City Business Units	ATT
J	Ensure a Seamless Interface between Public & Private Spaces	Medium Term (4-7 years)	Planning & Development	City Business Units	Local Design/ Development Industry
K	Explore an Accessible Door-to-Door Transportation Service	Medium Term (4-7 years)	MAWG	Transit	Private Transportation Operators
L	Manage Access-A-Ride Demand	Medium Term (4-7 years)	MAWG	Transit	ATT & General Public
M	Monitor & Enforce Mobility & Accessibility Regulations	Ongoing	MAWG	City Business Units	ATT





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