

City of Quesnel Accessibility Audit: Final Report

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) was hired by the City of Quesnel in Fall 2016 to undertake an audit of municipal streets in the downtown core as well as an audit of the exterior approach to City Hall. The primary focus of the audit of the downtown streetscape was Reid Street between Shepherd Avenue and Carson Avenue (Highway 97); however, other areas that were also visited included parts of St. Laurent Avenue, Barlow Avenue, Front Street (Highway 97) and the alleys that run parallel to Reid Street.

Audit Method

An accessibility audit team was formed to conduct the audit. The team consisted of a SPARC BC staff member and a local resident from the City of Quesnel Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee – Alison Duddy.

As part of this project, the SPARC BC audit team reviewed best practices in current and new standards in accessible street and sidewalk design; developed an accessibility audit checklist; met with City Staff and the City of Quesnel Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee on November 21st, 2016 to gather preliminary input on the checklist as well as key accessibility issues in the approach to City Hall and the downtown streetscape. The site visits were conducted on November 22nd, 2016.

Audit Findings

This report summarizes the audit findings for the approach to City Hall and the downtown streetscape in the “Audit Findings” portion of the report. In general, the consultants found that the community has shown a commitment to improving community accessibility by: making accessibility improvements to the approach to City Hall; creating new curb ramps at older intersections; and regularly repairing sections of cracked pavement as needed.

However, there are some limitations in the current built environment which can make it challenging for people with disabilities, particularly people who use mobility devices and people with low vision, to comfortably and safely navigate the downtown core. Some of the highlights of the recurring audit recommendations are outlined below as well as in the “Recurring Findings in Downtown Streetscape” section.

Walkway widths

Things done well:

- Most sidewalks in the main commercial areas provide enough space for two people using mobility devices to pass by each other in opposite directions;
- Most walkways are clear of obstructions and keep street furniture in a well-defined zone along the outer edge of the walkway.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Explore the feasibility of widening the sidewalks on some of the connecting streets;
- In areas where a curb ramp may encroach on the accessible path of travel and it is not possible to widen the sidewalk, it is advisable to consider using tactile surface indicators or colour contrasting paint to alert people with visual disabilities to the upcoming curb ramp and cross slope.

Walking surfaces and textures

Things done well:

- Most sidewalks are smooth, accessible and slip resistant and use materials such as concrete or asphalt;
- Most newer sidewalks have smooth transitions between the different sections of concrete.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- As resources permit, replace existing older concrete sidewalks with large gaps in between concrete sections with the newer style of sidewalk with smooth transitions;
- Consider replacing current tree grates (with large openings) with a more accessible style (with smaller openings) that are less hazardous for people using mobility devices;
- Consider replacing irregular surfaces, such as cobblestones and interlocking pavers, with a more smooth and accessible and slip resistant surface that is less vulnerable to uplift and is safer for people using mobility devices.

Places to sit and rest

Things done well:

- The City has done an excellent job at providing benches at regular intervals which provide space for people with limited mobility to sit and rest.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- When installing future benches, work to incorporate extra space alongside the bench for someone using a mobility device to sit and rest by a companion who is seated on the bench (this resting space should not impede the path of travel).
- When benches are installed or replaced, ensure that they incorporate back rests as well as proper drainage so that rain water and ice do not accumulate.

Curb ramps

Things done well:

- The City has provided curb ramps at almost all street corners, which is impressive given that the City of Quesnel is a historic community with older infrastructure that has been upgraded over time;
- Newer curb ramps incorporate tactile, directional lines for people with low vision.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Prioritize upgrading challenging curb ramps to fix cracked pavement, smooth transitions between the curb ramp and roadway, add tactile warnings for people with visual disabilities, and provide a gradual incline (i.e. slope of 1:20 is preferred).

Crosswalks and intersections

Things done well:

- Most cross walks are well marked and well-lit for pedestrians and drivers;
- There are crosswalks provided at the edge of major blocks on most streets;
- Crosswalks along Highway 97 have pedestrian controlled crossing signals.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Consider adding mid-block crosswalks in some areas of Reid Street as a traffic calming measure and to link accessible parking stalls on the east side with benches and shops along the west side of Reid Street.
- Explore the feasibility of adding visual and auditory pedestrian signals with countdown timers and pedestrian controlled push buttons for people with visual and auditory disabilities at busier intersections.

During the audit we also observed that there are some challenges in the downtown streetscape that fall outside of the City's immediate jurisdiction, such as inaccessible entrances for private businesses or tripping hazards on the building frontage zone or poorly designed curb ramps and crosswalks along Highway 97. Some of these issues can potentially be addressed by the City undertaking a leadership role and working in collaboration with local businesses and the Ministry of Transportation.

Overall recommendations

In addition, the audit team has also developed a broad set of policy recommendations for the City of Quesnel to consider when working to implement accessibility recommendations over time. These recommendations include:

- Start with the low cost changes;
- Start with higher priority recommendations;
- Consider accessibility early on during the initial design phase of any new construction;

- Develop a plan for implementing more expensive recommendations over time;
- Partner with local businesses and the Ministry of Transportation to raise awareness about accessibility issues outside of the City's immediate jurisdiction.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In Fall 2016, the City of Quesnel hired the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) to conduct an accessibility audit of the downtown streetscape as well as external pedestrian routes leading to City Hall.

Project context

The City of Quesnel is showing leadership in the area of accessibility by working to ensure that the community is accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities and seniors who would like to age-in-place and remain in their home community. One of the ways that the City is working towards this goal is by making the accessibility of its downtown commercial area a planning priority.

The City has consulted with the City of Quesnel Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee, local businesses and local funders around community needs in this area and is in the process of implementing a program to raise overall community awareness about the types of changes that are needed in general within the downtown commercial area. To complement these initiatives, the City of Quesnel is looking at issues of accessibility in the downtown streetscape as well as external pedestrian routes leading to City Hall.

In the near future, the City of Quesnel is scheduled to undergo significant upgrades to the municipal infrastructure underneath Reid Street which will likely involve tearing up sections of the street and sidewalks and rebuilding the streetscape. This may present a significant opportunity to redesign aspects of the streetscape to meet a higher standard of accessibility for people with disabilities and seniors.

Project scope

The primary focus of this project was focussed on auditing the external pedestrian route leading to City Hall as well as Reid Street; however, the consulting team also visited the following areas: St. Laurent Ave, Barlow Street, Front Street (Highway 97) and the two alleys that run parallel to Reid Street between St. Laurent Avenue and Barlow Street.

Structure of the report

This introductory section is followed by an acknowledgements section and a description of the accessibility audit method. The Audit Findings section is divided into two main components:

- 1) Audit findings specific to City Hall;
- 2) Recurring themes that emerged through the audit of the downtown streetscape;

The final section of the report summarizes the overall conclusions and recommendations that emerged through this project. The Appendix provides location-specific findings for the various streets and intersections that were visited.

3.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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4.0 AUDIT METHOD

The research method consisted of the following steps:

- 1) Best practices review and the development of an audit checklist;
- 2) Meeting with city staff and the Quesnel Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee;
- 3) Site visits;
- 4) Report development.

Best practices review and checklist development: At the beginning of the project, SPARC BC conducted an online review of current and new standards in accessible street and sidewalk design to ensure that this audit project used leading accessibility standards. These findings were summarized in a draft accessibility audit checklist.

Meeting with City Staff and Quesnel Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee: Prior to the site visits, SPARC BC met with the Quesnel Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee on November 21st, 2016 to gather preliminary input on key accessibility issues for the approach to City Hall and the downtown streetscape. SPARC BC presented a draft checklist for accessible and age-friendly pedestrian streetscapes for discussion. The checklist was further refined based on community input.

Site visits: The accessibility audit team, which consisted of a SPARC BC staff member and a local resident who uses a wheelchair, conducted the site visits for the accessibility audit on November 22nd, 2016. Audit tools included a camera, tape measure and the accessibility checklist. City staff and advisory committee members were also invited to participate during the accessibility audit to learn about the audit process and to provide additional input.

Audit scope: The primary focus of the audit was on assessing the current level of accessibility of the approach to City Hall and main commercial area of Reid St between Shepherd Ave on the north and Carson Ave to the south. However, the audit team was able to also visit some other areas of the downtown streetscape that were identified to be a high priority. Subsequent follow up visits to various areas took place on November 23rd 2017 to gather further photos for the audit report.

Report development: SPARC BC developed a draft report summarizing the findings which was provided to our community researchers, City staff and the Quesnel Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and feedback in December. The final report incorporates their feedback.

5.0 AUDIT FINDINGS

The primary goal of the accessibility audit was to assess the current level of accessibility of the approach to City Hall and the downtown commercial streetscape. The main focus of the downtown audit was on the section of Reid Street between Shepherd Avenue and Carson Avenue (Highway 97). We also visited other areas of the downtown streetscape as time permitted including areas of St. Laurent Ave, Barlow Street, Front Street (Highway 97).

This audit findings section is divided into two main sub-sections:

1. The audit findings for the approach to City Hall;
2. Recurring themes that emerged through the audit of the downtown streetscape;

To learn more about specific locations and streets, refer to the Appendix which provides location-specific findings.

5.1 Approach to City Hall

During the site visit of City Hall, we considered accessibility for people with disabilities who were arriving at City Hall using various means of transportation including those who are:

- being dropped off at City Hall by another driver (e.g. taxi, HandyDART, or friends/family);
- driving to and parking in the City Hall parking lot;
- taking public transit to and from City Hall;
- walking (or wheeling) to City Hall from downtown Quesnel using City sidewalks.

Arriving at City Hall – Drop off/Pick up area

Because City Hall was constructed on a steep hill, the most accessible place for people with physical disabilities to be picked up and dropped off is the main parking lot of City Hall. This allows a visitor to City Hall with limited mobility to avoid going up the steep hills on Kinchant St, Vaughan St or St. Laurent Ave.

While there is no formal designated pick up drop off zone, there is sufficient space for someone to be dropped off by the ramp leading to the main entrance. Thus, there is an informal pick up and drop off area that can be used by people with disabilities.

Photo 1: Informal pick up/drop off area in City Hall parking lot by main entrance



Recommendation: In the future, the City may wish to consider creating a more formal pick up/drop off area by the main entrance with the following accessibility features:

- Sufficient space for buses and HandyDART vehicles to drop people off at City Hall;
- A sheltered area where people waiting to be picked up can sit and wait for a bus.

Arriving at City Hall – Public transit

There are a few different bus stops located close to City Hall that people may use if they are taking the bus to City Hall. These bus stops are found at the following locations:

- On Kinchant St in front of the library;
- On St. Laurent Ave between Kinchant St and Vaughan St;
- On St. Laurent Ave between Vaughan St and Callanan St.

City Hall is constructed on a steep hill, which creates a natural topographic accessibility barrier. One of the limitations with these three bus stops is that they are all located downhill from City Hall's main entrance and would require someone with a disability to go uphill to access City Hall. This may not pose a challenge for people who use motorized wheelchairs or scooters, but it would pose an accessibility barrier for those using manual wheelchairs and/or walkers.

Recommendation: Explore the feasibility of creating a bus stop that is located uphill by the main entrance to City Hall (i.e. within or proximate to the City Hall parking lot). Refer to the following photos for pictures of the existing bus stops by City Hall and the surrounding area.

Photo 2: Bus stop by City Hall and Library located downhill from main entrance to City Hall



Photo 3: Bus stop on St. Laurent Ave between Kinchant St and Vaughan St



Photo 4: Bus stop on St. Laurent Ave between Callanan St and Vaughan St



Photo 5: Hill on Vaughan Street connecting St. Laurent bus stops to main entrance of City Hall



Recommendations:

- Explore the feasibility of incorporating the following accessibility features into existing and new bus stops serving City Hall:
 - A sheltered area;
 - Bench;
 - Clear space for someone in a mobility device to sit within the sheltered area alongside a companion;
 - Accessible clear path of travel connecting the bus stop to the main entrance of City Hall.
- Explore the feasibility of installing a sidewalk on Vaughn Street so that visitors do not need to walk/wheel up the road.

Arriving at City Hall – Parking in the City Hall parking lot

Accessible parking stalls have been designated at the City Hall parking lot and incorporate the following accessibility features:

- They are spacious and incorporate transfer space alongside the parking stall to allow people using mobility devices to safely transfer in and out of their vehicle;
- They are well marked by both a painted symbol within the stall as well as a disability parking sign on a post.

Photo 6: Accessible parking stalls in City parking lot



Recommendation: One limitation of the current parking stalls is they are located on a slight slope which can make it more challenging when entering and exiting the vehicle and transferring to a mobility device. Accessibility would be enhanced by adding additional accessible parking stalls that are located on a more level surface.

Photo 7: Potential location for more accessible parking stalls on a more level surface



Recommendation: When creating new accessible parking stalls, it is recommended that the City take into account the following accessibility considerations:

- Locate stalls as close as possible to the main entrance to improve access for people who can only walk short distances;
- Provide a sufficient supply of accessible parking (leading standards require 1 in 25 stalls to be accessible);
- Provide adequate vertical clearance to accommodate larger vehicles and side/rear lifts (at least 2.3 metres high);
- Ensure that parking stalls are wide enough to accommodate mobility devices:
 - BC Building Code requires width of 3.7 metre (including access aisle) – two adjacent parking stalls can share a 1.2 metre access aisle (marked by the yellow diagonal lines);
 - Van accessible parking stalls are wider stalls that can accommodate vans with side/rear lifts and have a combined width of 4.9 m (3.4 m parking stall plus 1.5 m access aisle marked by yellow diagonal lines);
- Locate parking stalls on smooth, level surfaces that are more accessible and safer for people transferring to mobility devices;
- Maximize visibility by providing both a painted symbol in the parking space as well as a sign on a post (Note: painted symbols in the parking space are not always visible in snowy weather conditions);
- Consider wheelchair access for electrical plugs for block heaters.

Photo 8: Current electrical plug in for block heaters is located outside of reach for someone seated in a wheelchair.



Arriving at City Hall – Exterior pathways connecting parking lot to main entrance

There is a good accessible pedestrian route connecting the City Hall parking lot and the main entrance.

Things done well:

- The pathway is clear of obstructions and is wide and spacious;
- There is an accessible ramp and accessible handrails connecting the parking lot to the main entrance;
- The staircase and ramp are located alongside each other and provide choice for people visiting City Hall;
- The ramp is made of a smooth and level surface (concrete);
- The visual and textural contrast between the concrete ramp and walkway with interlocking pavers helps to guide people with visual disabilities and warn about a change in elevation.

Photo 9: Curb ramp with slight lip/dip that may be challenging for some people who use mobility devices



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Improve slight lip/dip at curb ramp connected to the ramp to City Hall to decrease challenges for people in mobility devices;
- Explore the feasibility of extending the top section of the ramp leading into City Hall to make it a more gradual incline (Note: feedback from the Advisory Committee has indicated that some people currently require assistance to go up this ramp).

- Explore the feasibility of installing a call button for assistance at the base of the ramp for people who would like some assistance.
- Consider replacing interlocking pavers with concrete (a more smooth surface) to decrease barriers caused by freeze thaw action for those using mobility devices.

Photo 10: Accessible exterior pathway connecting parking lot to main entrance with ramps



Please note that if the interlocking pavers/brick are replaced with concrete (which is the same colour and texture as the ramp), it is important to incorporate tactile warnings on the ramps and staircases to warn people with visual disabilities about a change in elevation. Thus, it is recommended that the City provide brightly coloured tactile warning strip at the top and bottom of the ramp as well as on the stair nosings.

Arriving at City Hall – Exterior pathway connecting accessible parking on Kinchant St to main entrance

Accessible parking stalls have been also provided on Kinchant St. This provides a good parking option for people using motorized mobility devices such as scooters or power chairs.

Photo 11: Designated accessible parking stalls on Kinchant St.



The City has recently made a significant improvement to the approach to City Hall. Previously there was a ramp that led partially up the way to City Hall and then connected to a flight of stairs. This confused and frustrated some visitors with disabilities that would start going up the ramp and then turn around once they met the stairs.

The new ramp was well designed and provides an accessible path of travel from Kinchant St (and the accessible parking on Kinchant St) for visitors to City Hall. One limitation of the ramp is that it is very long, and therefore tiring, for someone to go up using a manual wheelchair.

Photo 12: Exterior pathway connecting Kinchant St to the main entrance





Individuals visiting City Hall have the opportunity to either take the ramp or a flight of stairs.

Recommendation: Accessibility of the stairs could be enhanced by adding brightly colored tactile warning strips to stair nosings that help to guide people with visual disabilities.

Main entrance to City Hall

The main entrance to City Hall meets a high standard of accessibility because there is:

- a level door threshold entrance;
- a wide and spacious door opening;
- automatic power operated doors.

There are two sets of doors at the exterior entrance:

- A pair of doors that are opened with loop style handles that are sometimes used by staff outside of business hours;
- The automatic doors which provide public access during regular business hours.

Photo 13: Main entrance doors for City Hall



During the site visit, it was identified that visitors to City Hall are sometimes confused by the two sets of doors and do not notice the power operated doors because one has to be positioned immediately in front of the automatic doors in order to activate the door opening sensor.

Recommendation: Accessibility and wayfinding could potentially be enhanced by using prominent signage stating “Main Entrance” to make the main public door the more obvious main entrance. The current “Municipal Offices” sign above the door is aesthetically pleasing; however, may be too subtle for wayfinding purposes for a new visitor to City Hall.

It may also be beneficial to add a call button for assistance that people with disabilities could use if the automatic door opener was not functioning properly or if they were visiting City Hall for a meeting outside of regular business hours.

Interior entrance doors to City Hall

Once you enter City Hall, there is another set of doors that you go through before you access the reception area.

- The main entrance door that is used by the public to access the municipal offices and is opened by a lever style handle. It is designated with a sign stating “Municipal Offices;”
- An alternate door with a loop style handle is designated with the sign “Elevator Inside.”

For new visitors, it is not fully intuitive that both of these doors lead into the same room and that the “Elevator Inside” door has an automatic door opener.

Photo 14: Interior entrance doors



Recommendations: Replacing the sign stating “Elevator Inside” with one stating “Accessible Entrance” may be more intuitive. Other opportunities to enhance accessibility of this set of doors include:

- Increasing the size of the automatic door opener button to make it more prominent. At the time of the audit, it was identified that some City staff members had not noticed the automatic door opener button previously despite frequently using the main entrance.
- Keeping the signage clear of obstructions, such as the recycling bins, which block visitors’ view of the signage.

Photo 15: Current automatic door opener push button



Photo 16: Signage blocked by recycling bin



Front reception counter at City Hall

Things done well:

- The reception counter is easy to find once you enter the second set of doors into City Hall.
- Once you are through the main entrance of the City Hall, there are some accessible door mats that help to prevent slippage and guide people with visual disabilities to the main reception desk.
- There is also an accessible reception desk that is positioned at a wheelchair accessible height, provides knee space underneath the counter and allows a person seated in a mobility device to communicate face to face with front reception staff.

Photo 17: Front reception at City Hall



Photo 18: Wheelchair accessible reception desk



Recommendations: Accessibility could be enhanced by

- Providing training to staff members receiving public inquiries (i.e. City Planner, Building Inspections, Clerk) about the availability of the accessible reception counter.

- Adding an auditory hearing loop at reception to improve access for people who are Hard of Hearing and use t-coil hearing aids.
- Providing additional seating in the reception area for people to sit and rest while they wait for service or for a friend/companion who is communicating with City staff.

Public washrooms by front reception

During the site visit, we also visited the public washrooms by the front reception area and assessed their accessibility. These washrooms were built to a high standard of accessibility and incorporate a number of accessibility features such as:

- Accessible door handles;
- Sufficient space for a person using a larger mobility device to maneuver within the accessible washroom stall and within the overall washroom;
- Grab bars and an accessible transfer space alongside the toilet make it possible for people to safely transfer;
- The soap and paper towel dispensers, mirror are located at accessible heights;
- There are automatic/lever faucet handles;
- An accessible counter with knee space underneath.

Recommendations: Some opportunities to enhance accessibility of the washrooms by the front reception area include:

- Adding Braille/raised lettering to washroom signs;
- Providing a lower coat hook in the women's washroom;
- Moving the garbage bin in the women's washroom so that it does not obstruct the accessible path of travel to the sink;
- Considering access for people using larger mobility devices next time the men's washroom is renovated (Note: the current washroom is accessible by current BC Building Code standards, but may not provide enough space to maneuver for people using larger motorized mobility devices).

Photo 19: Existing washroom signage



Photo 20: Coat hook is difficult to reach



Photo 21: Garbage bin in women's washroom obstructs the accessible path of travel to the sink



Photo 22: Accessible stall in men's washroom may not have enough space for someone using a larger mobility device such as a scooter or larger power wheelchair



5.2 Recurring Findings in Downtown Streetscape

During our audit of the downtown streetscape, we looked at the following design features:

- walkway width;
- walking surfaces and textures;
- places to sit and rest;
- curb ramps;
- crosswalks and intersections.

This section summarizes the recurring themes that emerged across the different areas of the downtown streetscape, while the Appendix provides an inventory of location-specific audit findings.

Walkway width

Things done well:

- There are wide spacious sidewalks along major streets;
- Most pathways are spacious enough to allow two people using mobility devices to pass by each other (1.5 m or wider);¹
- Most walkways are clear of obstructions² and keep street furniture in a well-defined zone along the outer edge of the walkways;³
- There are no posts, bollards, or maze gates which block the path of travel for people using mobility devices;
- There are no non cane detectable protruding objects;
- Bylaw enforcement officers issue tickets if a truck drives onto the sidewalk during winter and impedes the path of travel.

¹ One of the key considerations is to ensure that the width of the clear path of travel is proportionate to the amount of traffic and busyness of an area. For example, in Winnipeg, the design standard for the downtown core area is a clear path of travel of 1900 to 3000 mm plus a 200-300 mm property line/building frontage zone. The design guideline for a suburban area is a clear path of travel of 1500 mm plus contrasting surfaces on each side (i.e. anything but concrete) for a total width of 1900 mm.

² The following features should be placed outside of the clear, minimum width (lamp posts, tree grates, trees, sign posts, transformers, mail boxes, newspaper stands, trash containers, planters, bus shelters, benches, sandwich boards, guy wires, chains, cables, ropes).

³ The street furniture should be located in a well-defined zone along the outer edge of the walkways either on the building side (the building frontage zone) or on the street element zone (between the walkway and the roadway).

Photo 23: Spacious walkway on Reid Street that is approximately 1.8 m wide where street furniture (e.g. garbage bin) is kept outside the accessible path of travel



Current accessibility limitations:

- While we observed that the sidewalks within the scope of this audit tended to be spacious and wide enough to accommodate two wheelchairs in most areas, we also noticed that some of the sidewalks on the connecting streets in the downtown core were more narrow;
- In some parts of the City, driveways and curb ramps narrow or impede the accessible path of travel by creating cross slopes that could be challenging for people using mobility devices as well as potential accessibility barriers for people with low vision.

Photo 24 Tree grate narrows the accessible path of travel on McLean St sidewalk (by St. Laurent Ave). The gaps in the tree grate are also too large and hazardous for people using mobility devices



Photo 25: Sidewalk narrows along Shepherd Ave (west of Reid St) to 1120 mm which is not enough space for two people in mobility devices to pass by each other in opposite directions



Photo 26: Curb ramp by Health Unit on Reid Street provides access between the street and sidewalk for people using mobility devices, but may be difficult to detect for someone with low vision and narrows the clear path of travel



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- It may be challenging to fix some of these barriers, since there is not always room to expand the sidewalk without encroaching on the building frontage zone and/or roadway; however, wherever possible, it is recommended that the City work to ensure that:
 - there is enough space on a sidewalk for two wheelchairs to pass by one another;
 - sidewalks are wide enough so that curb ramps do not impede the level clear path of travel (min of 3 feet or 915 mm).

To see an example of how this may be addressed, refer to the following photo from another jurisdiction.

Photo 27: Example of driveway curb ramp where it does not impede the path of travel (min 915 mm)



- In areas where a curb ramp may impede the accessible path of travel, it is advisable to consider using tactile surface indicators or colour contrasting paint to alert people to the upcoming curb ramp and cross-slope.

Refer to the following photos for some examples of this from other jurisdictions.

Photo 28: Example of using paint to warn people with visual disabilities about the presence of a curb ramp⁴



Photo 29: Example using detectable warnings/tactile walking surface indicators/truncated domes to warn people with visual disabilities about the presence of a curb ramp



Walking surfaces and textures

Things done well:

- Most sidewalks are smooth, accessible and slip resistant and use materials such as concrete or asphalt;
- Most newer sidewalks have smooth transitions between the different sections of the concrete sidewalks;

⁴ When using paint to warn people about the approaching curb ramp, it is not recommended that the entire curb ramp be painted because this can make the surface more slippery (especially when wet).

- The city has taken steps to repair older sidewalks as needed;
- The sidewalk is easy to distinguish from the roadway for people with low vision.

Photo 30: New section of concrete sidewalk on Barlow Street by TD Bank with smooth transitions between different sections of concrete



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Repair cracked pavement as needed;
- If possible, explore the feasibility of creating a consistent funding source for replacing and repairing cracked pavement as this is likely to be a recurring issue with the local climate and freeze/thaw action;
- Explore different possibilities for improving drainage as sidewalk sections are replaced (Note: puddles become icy and slippery during winter);

Photo 31: Cracked concrete by Reason 2 Run



Photo 32: Puddle forming by Willis Harper may become an ice hazard



- Upgrade existing sidewalks with large gaps between the different sections of concrete to the new, more accessible style as resources permit.

Photo 33: Older sections of sidewalks have large gaps in between concrete sections (sometimes as wide as 38 mm) – these are a hazard for people using mobility devices



- Consider replacing current tree grates (with large openings) with grates (with smaller openings) that are less of a hazard for people using mobility devices. Grates are most accessible if openings have a maximum dimension of 13 mm. As well, the long dimension of the opening should be perpendicular to pedestrian traffic flow to limit risk of wheelchair wheels or canes getting caught in the openings.

Photo 34: Tree grate openings are too large and are a hazard for mobility devices



- Consider replacing irregular surfaces (such as cobblestones and interlocking pavers) with a more smooth and accessible and slip resistant surface (i.e. concrete and asphalt). Freeze thaw action can cause the different sections to uplift and create tripping hazards for people using mobility devices.

Note: different textures such as (cobblestones and interlocking pavers) can be used as a visual and tactile warning for people with low vision at the edge of pathways (i.e. the building frontage zone or the street element zone) or when different pathways intersect. To see an example of this from another jurisdiction, refer to the following photo.

Photo 35: Example where interlocking pavers can be used to differentiate clear path of travel from street element zone and building frontage zone



Places to sit and rest

Things done well:

- The City has done an excellent job of providing benches at regular intervals which provides places for people with limited mobility to sit and rest;
- Benches have a good colour contrast with the surroundings so that they are easy to detect for people with low vision;
- Many benches are connected to curb ramps and parking.

Photo 36: Benches by NE corner of Reid St and St. Laurent Ave



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- When installing future benches incorporate extra space alongside the bench for someone using a mobility device to sit and rest beside a companion who is seated on the bench. This resting space should not impede the path of travel.
- When benches are added or replaced, ensure they incorporate back rests as well as proper drainage so that rain water and ice do not accumulate.

Curb ramps

Things done well:

- The City has provided curb ramps at almost all street corners which is impressive given that the City of Quesnel is a historic city with older infrastructure that has been upgraded over time;
- Newer curb ramps are more likely to incorporate tactile, directional lines which help to guide people who have low vision;
- Most curb ramps are well lined up with city cross walks.

Photo 37: Newer curb ramp with smooth transition between curb ramp and street, gradual incline, and tactile indicators (SW corner of Reid St. and St. Laurent Ave crossing Reid St)



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Work to repair/replace curb ramps with cracked pavement (Note: this is likely to be an ongoing maintenance issue because of the local climate and freeze thaw action).
- Fix dip/lip at transition between curb ramp and street that can be a hazard for people using mobility devices.
- Improve the grade of curb ramps as the steepness may be an accessibility barrier (this is particularly challenging along sections of St. Laurent Ave.).
- As curb ramps are repaired or replaced, add tactile walking surface indicators that help to guide people with visual disabilities and warn them about the end of the sidewalk.

(Note: The City's new curb ramps with tactile directional lines will help to guide people with low vision and warn them about the curb ramp. However, to see the Canadian National Institute for the Blind's current recommended best practices around accessible and inclusive curb ramps and depressed curbs using deep attention TWSIs and deep guidance TWSIs, refer to their new Clearing Our Path website and guidelines for "Curb Ramps and Depressed Curbs." This can be accessed here: http://www.clearingourpath.ca/4.2.1-curb-ramps-and-depressed-curbs_e.php

In general, there is a good opportunity for the City to update its standard approach to constructing curb ramps to:

- Smooth transitions between the curb ramp and roadway;
- Increase safety for people with visual disabilities;
- Install curb ramps with a more gradual incline (slope of 1:20 is preferred).

Crosswalks and intersections

Things done well:

- Most cross walks are well marked and well-lit for pedestrians and drivers;
- There are crosswalks provided at the edge of major blocks on most streets;
- Cross walks along the highway (on Carson Ave and Front St) have pedestrian controlled crossing signals.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- There are some areas of the City, such as Reid St, where it would be beneficial to add mid-block crosswalks. This would be a traffic calming measure and would increase access to designated accessible parking stalls (which are all located on the east side of the street) and benches (which are often located on the west side of Reid St). If the City chooses to install a raised pedestrian crossing that is at the same level of the street, it is important to consider the safety needs of people with visual disabilities.⁵
- For busier intersections, it may be worthwhile to explore the feasibility of adding visual and auditory pedestrian signals with countdown timers and pedestrian controlled push buttons that are accessible for both people with visual and auditory disabilities. Refer to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind’s Clearing Our Path for Accessible Pedestrian Signals for further information (http://www.clearingourpath.ca/4.2.4-accessible-pedestrian-signals_e.php)

Opportunities to engage with the local business community

During the accessibility audit, it was identified that some of the accessibility barriers that are found in the downtown commercial streetscape fall outside of the immediate jurisdiction of the City. Some examples include businesses that:

- Have entrances which lack a level threshold;
- Have stairs (or a step) that block(s) access to their main entrance;
- Do not have automatic door openers and/or accessible door handles;

⁵ Refer to CNIB’s guidelines for “Raised Pedestrian Crossings” for further information. http://www.clearingourpath.ca/4.2.3-raised-pedestrian-crossings_e.php

- Locate their sandwich board advertisements in the public right of way (instead of on their private property in the building frontage area);
- Have tripping hazards, such as cracked pavement and/or abrupt changes in elevation, in the building frontage zone.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- While these areas are outside of the City's direct jurisdiction, the City may be able to work in collaboration with the local business community to raise awareness about ways to attract customers with disabilities and seniors to their businesses.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Quesnel has demonstrated its commitment to improving accessibility by:

- Establishing community accessibility as a priority issue;
- Engaging with the City of Quesnel Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee;
- Taking steps to improve accessibility in community infrastructure over time, such as installing curb ramps, improving access for the exterior route to City Hall;
- Undertaking this project;
- Engaging with the business community around accessibility.

This report outlines a large number of specific actions that the municipality can undertake to enhance accessibility within the community. In light of the large number of recommendations, it is worthwhile for the municipality to consider developing an intentional and phased approach to addressing these recommendations over time as resources permit. This section presents some overall recommendations for the municipality to consider as it works towards becoming a fully accessible and inclusive community.

6.1 Start with the low cost changes

There is a broad set of recommendations in this report and they range from inexpensive (or even free) to larger scale projects which require considerable funding. One of the quickest ways to see results is to start with the low cost changes. Some examples of free/cheap changes include:

- Lowering the height of a coat hook in an accessible washroom so that it is reachable for someone seated in a wheelchair;
- Adding Braille/raised lettering signs to the accessible washrooms;
- Letting staff that interact with the public know about the wheelchair accessible reception counter.

6.2 Start with higher priority recommendations

While it would be ideal to upgrade all of the sites at once so that they meet the highest standard of accessibility, this may not be possible because of funding/resource limitations. Thus, it is recommended that the City of Quesnel start by identifying which of the accessibility recommendations should be implemented first. Some questions that could be asked when identifying which recommendations should be highest priority include:

- Does this accessibility barrier create a safety hazard?
- Which sites are used by the greatest number of users?
- Does the barrier create a significant accessibility challenge which prevents access and limits people with disabilities access to services and community amenities?
- Could implementing the recommendation help support community economic development by retaining senior residents and/or attracting tourists with disabilities?

The City of Quesnel Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee would be a good resource to use when determining which recommendations should be considered higher priority. It may be worthwhile for the City to undertake a prioritization workshop with the Committee to gather feedback and input.

6.3 Consider accessibility early on during the initial design phase of a new development

It is generally more effective to consider accessibility early on during the design phase of a project because it limits the need for costly upgrades over time. For example, it is more affordable to install curb ramps with a gradual incline and/or tactile indicators for people with low vision at the outset. Making these changes to the built environment after the fact can be more costly. Accessibility should be a top consideration when repairing sidewalks/intersections that have been damaged during adjacent construction or when building new infrastructure in the City.

6.4 Develop a plan for addressing more expensive changes over time

It is likely that some of the more expensive accessibility modifications will need a plan for addressing them over time as time and resources permit. It is recommended that the City of Quesnel identify which of the higher cost projects should be considered highest priority and develop a phased approach for how to address them over time.

6.5 Partner with local businesses and the Ministry of Transportation to raise awareness about accessibility issues outside of the City's immediate jurisdiction

Some of the most challenging accessibility barriers are found in the streetscape in areas where the City's jurisdiction and other areas of jurisdiction intersect. For example, the transitions between the City sidewalk and the building frontage areas on private property often have abrupt changes in elevation which can create tripping hazards for people with disabilities. In addition, local businesses often place their sandwich board advertisements in a location which obstructs the public right of way. Moreover, some of the least accessible sidewalks and intersections in the downtown core are located along Highway 97 which is an area of overlapping jurisdiction between the City and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. It is recommended that the City bring relevant issues to their attention and advocate for accessibility enhancements.

7.0 APPENDIX – LOCATION SPECIFIC AUDIT FINDINGS

This section provides the location specific audit findings from the audit of the downtown streetscape.

7.1 Reid Street

The audit of Reid Street was focussed on the sidewalks and intersections between Shepherd Ave to the north and Carson Ave to the south.

Intersection of Reid St and Shepherd Ave

Things done well:

- Well marked crosswalk;
- Curb ramps have been provided.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Smooth transitions between curb ramps and roadway;
- Fix cracked, rough pavement;
- Incorporate tactile warnings for people with visual disabilities that warn them about the end of the sidewalk;
- Explore the possibility of widening the accessible pathway around the pole so that it is not obstructed by a pole and grate;
- Explore ways to improve drainage so that puddles (and ice) do not accumulate by the curb ramp.

Photo 38: SE corner of Shepherd Ave & Reid St looking north towards Best Western – Challenging cross slope and abrupt transition between curb ramp and roadway



Photo 39: SE corner of Shepherd Ave & Reid St looking west towards Safeway – Pole and grate obstruct the accessible path of travel



Photo 40: NE corner of Shepherd Ave and Reid St connected to crosswalk leading to SE corner – Manhole, cracked concrete, lip



Photo 41: NE corner of Shepherd Ave and Reid St connected to crosswalk leading to NW corner – puddle, cracked asphalt, lip



Photo 42: NW corner of Shepherd Ave and Reid St – Lip/gap at transition between roadway and curb ramp



Photo 43: SW corner of Shepherd Ave and Reid St looking NE towards Begbies – Gaps in the transition between the curb ramp and roadway



Photo 44: SW corner of Shepherd Ave and Reid St looking east towards the liquor store



Photo 45: Broken pavement by SW corner of Shepherd Ave and Reid St



Reid Street between Shepherd Ave and St. Laurent Ave – East side of the Street

If you are heading north on Reid St just past St. Laurent Ave on the east side of the street, there is a disability parking stall.

Things done well:

- The disability parking stall is spacious and provides ample space for people to transfer to mobility devices on the left or right side of the vehicle;
- Well-marked with a sign on a post and a painted symbol within the stall.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Provide curb ramps which provide access between the parking stall and the sidewalk and does not require the person with a disability to go on the roadway to access the existing curb ramps by the crosswalk intersection.
- Extend the painting of the diagonal yellow lines closer to the curb to discourage drivers from parking in the transfer space and preventing someone with a disability from entering or exiting their vehicle.

Photo 46: Accessible parking stall on Reid St. by St. Laurent Ave



As we walked north along the Reid Street sidewalk, we observed that the following features were designed well:

- Generally, the sidewalk is spacious and more than wide enough for people using mobility devices to pass by each other in opposite directions.
- The concrete sidewalks are made from an accessible, non slip surface.
- Street furniture, such as garbage bins, are kept outside of the main path of travel.

Photo 47: Wide spacious path of travel with ample space for two mobility devices to pass by each other where street furniture (i.e. the garbage bin) is kept outside the accessible path



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- As sidewalk sections are replaced, improve transitions between different concrete sections;
- Continue to issue warnings/parking tickets if vehicles drive onto the sidewalk during winter and obstruct the path of travel;
- Explore ways to improve drainage and prevent the accumulation of puddles/ice;
- Repair cracked pavement (Note: this is likely an ongoing maintenance issue because of freeze thaw action);
- Work with businesses to increase the visibility of their curb ramps leading into the businesses.

Photo 48: Older sections of sidewalk have large gaps in between concrete sections that are a hazard for people using mobility devices (sometimes as wide as 38 mm)



Photo 48: Parked cars sometimes park too far forward and narrow the accessible path of travel



Photo 49: Puddles form along Reid St—will create an icy, slippery road surface in winter



Photo 50: Cracked pavement in front of Reason to Run



Photo 51: Broken pavement by Quiznos



Photo 52: Cracked pavement in front of Booster juice



Photo 53: Cracked pavement in front of Subway



Photo 54: Curb ramps leading into businesses such as Quiznos and Karin's are hard to detect for people who have low vision



At the north end of the block, there are two other disability parking stalls in front of the liquor store. It was identified that this may not be the best location for disability parking because it is a high traffic area where cars are approaching the end of the one-way stretch of Reid St and are turning left or right onto Shepherd Ave and may not be as aware of people using mobility devices

who are exiting their vehicles and travelling along the roadway to get to the curb ramp. Another consideration is that the liquor store has a private parking lot with a disability parking spot already. It may be more useful to have a disability parking spot in the middle of the block, such as by the Quesnel Bakery.

Things done well:

- The disability parking stalls are spacious and provide ample space for people to transfer to mobility devices on the left or right side of the vehicle;
- Well-marked with a sign on a post and a painted symbol within the stall.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Provide curb ramps which provide access between the parking stall and the roadway and does not require the person with a disability to go on the roadway to access the existing curb ramps by the intersection or the alley by the liquor store.

Photo 55: Accessible parking on Reid St by Shepherd Ave



Reid Street between Shepherd Ave and St. Laurent Ave – West side of the Street

Things done well:

- On the west side of Reid Street north from Shepherd Ave, the sidewalk is generally wide enough for two people using mobility devices to pass by one another.
- The accessible path of travel is also generally free of obstructions such as street furniture.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Consider using paint or tactile surface indicators to warn people with visual disabilities about the driveway.

Photo 56: Driveways connecting Safeway to Reid St have a cross slope and may be difficult to detect for someone with low vision.



- Prioritize repairing sections of the sidewalk with broken concrete.

Photo 57: Broken sidewalk in front of Safeway



- Replace existing tree grates with more accessible tree grates (with smaller openings) that are less hazardous for people using mobility devices.

Photo 58: Tree grate openings are too large and are a hazard for mobility devices



- Consider creating an accessible crosswalk in the middle of the block. This would potentially serve both as a traffic calming measure and as a way to better connect the east side of the street to the west side of the street. There is a curb ramp by the bench in front of the Safeway that could be a good potential site for a crosswalk; however, some shrubbery would have to be cleared first because otherwise it blocks the view of traffic for someone seated in a wheelchair.
- When the bench is replaced, provide a designated clear space beside the bench for someone to sit in a mobility device beside a companion without obstructing the accessible path of travel.

Photo 59: Bench in front of Safeway



Photo 60: Shrubbbery that would block view at proposed crosswalk



Intersection of Reid St and St. Laurent Ave

Things done well:

- Curb ramps are aligned with the crosswalk and crosswalks are well marked.
- A newer curb ramp style on the NE, NW and SW corners provides tactile directional lines for people with low vision.
- Benches provide places for people to sit and rest.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Smooth transitions between curb ramps and crosswalk so that there is a minimal lip/dip.
- Consider replacing the cobblestone surface at the SE corner with concrete with tactile, directional lines for people with low vision.
- Improve colour contrast of planting beds by using colour contrasting paint on the grey concrete planting bed border.

Photo 61: NE corner of Reid St. and St. Laurent Ave has tactile lines, but still has a lip



Photo 62: Benches by NE corner of Reid St and St. Laurent



Photo 63: NW corner of Reid St and St. Laurent Ave looking east with tactile lines



Photo 64: NW corner of Reid St. and St. Laurent Ave looking south with tactile lines



Photo 65: SE corner of Reid St. and St. Laurent Ave – The cobblestones are a challenging surface



Photo 66: NW corner of Reid St. and St. Laurent Ave with pole that obstructs view



Photo 67: Bench at NW corner of Reid St. and St. Laurent Ave



Photo 68: SW corner of St. Laurent Ave and Reid St with smooth transition



Photo 69: Uneven sidewalk surface and limited colour contrast around planting bed



Reid St between St. Laurent Ave and Barlow Ave – Spirit Square

Spirit Square is located on the east side of Reid St just south of St. Laurent Ave and is an important community gathering place in the downtown core.

Things done well:

- It provides benches to sit and rest at as well as a raised platform that public speakers can use as a stage during community events.
- A ramp has been installed to provide access to the raised platform.

Some opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Improve the colour contrast of the planting beds and stairs with the surroundings as they may be difficult to notice for people with low vision;
- The interlocking paver/cobblestone sidewalk surface can be challenging for people with disabilities, especially during winter weather when ice accumulates and freeze thaw action forces the different sections to move and uplift;
- Replace the current benches with a different style with back rests and better drainage so that puddles and ice do not accumulate in winter;

Photo 70: Limited colour contrast and no tactile warnings on Spirit Square steps



Photo 71: Planting beds have limited colour contrast with surroundings



Photo 72: Benches without back rests & some water accumulation



Photo 73: Ramp provides access to raised area but limited space for people using larger mobility devices (only 1 m wide at its narrowest section)



Reid St between St. Laurent Ave and Barlow Ave – East side

Past Spirit Square on the east side of the street, there are some businesses and the Canada Post office. Things done well:

- Spacious pathway;
- Well lit;
- Street furniture (e.g. garbage bins) are kept outside of accessible path of travel.

Photo 74: Spacious pathway on Reid St in front of Canada Post Office



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Improve transition between City sidewalk and building frontage zone (e.g. in front of City Furniture);
- Repair areas with cracked/broken sidewalks;
- Improve transitions between different sections of concrete sidewalk where the gaps are too large;
- Improve colour contrast of pebbled planter by CIBC relative to its surroundings.

Photo 75: Uneven transition between City sidewalk and area in front of City Furniture creates barrier for mobility devices.



Photo 76: Cracked pavement by Canada Post Office



Photo 77: Pebbled planter bed in front of CIBC lacks sufficient colour contrast with surroundings for people with low vision



There is also a disability parking spot in front of City Furniture as well as a disability parking spot at south end of the block in front of CIBC. The spots are well marked with both a painted symbol within the stall and a sign on a post. A ramp has been added to provide access to the parking stall by CIBC.

Opportunity to enhance accessibility:

- Paint yellow diagonal lines on the other side of the parking stall to mark the accessible pedestrian pathway leading towards the curb ramp (Note: sometimes people park to the right of this spot and inadvertently block the curb ramp).

Photo 78: Accessible parking spot in front of CIBC



Reid St between St Laurent Ave and Barlow Ave – West side of the street

Things done well:

- the west side of Reid St between St. Laurent Ave and Barlow Ave is also spacious and allows enough room for people using mobility devices to pass by each other in opposite directions;
- There is a new stretch of sidewalk that is well designed with excellent transitions between the different concrete sections;
- There is a bench where someone with limited mobility can sit and rest.

Photo 79: Spacious walking route along west side of Reid St



Photo 80: New sidewalk section between TD Canada Trust and Circle S Western Wear



Photo 81: Yellow paint warns people about abrupt change in elevation by TD Bank



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Repair cracked pavement as needed.

Photo 82: Damaged sidewalk in front of Granville's Coffee



Photo 83: Gap in sidewalk by intersection of St Laurent Ave and Reid St



Photo 84: Cracked sidewalk in front of movie theatre



Photo 85: Hole in sidewalk by Blenz Frozen Yogurt



- Work in collaboration with businesses to improve transitions between the City sidewalk and the building frontage zone. Currently there are abrupt changes in elevation that are at best hazards and at worst accessibility barriers which prevent access.

Photo 86: Ramp leading up to Granville's Coffee has a lip



Photo 87: Step leading up to Movie Theatre is a potential hazard that is not well marked



- Consider providing a crosswalk connecting the bench by Green Tree to the other side of the street where disability parking is located.

Photo 88: Bench and curb ramp in front of Green Tree



Intersection of Reid St and Barlow Ave

Things done well:

- Benches provide space to sit and rest;
- Curb ramps have gradual incline;
- The nonslip surface is good and improves access in cold weather.

Photo 89: Public art bench in front of Willis Harper on SE corner of Reid St and Barlow Ave



Photo 90: Bench at NE corner of Barlow Ave and Reid St



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Redirect the curb ramps so that they are lined up with the crosswalk rather than the middle of the intersection. The current curb ramps are lined up with the middle of the intersection, not the crosswalk. This could confuse pedestrians with visual disabilities and inadvertently direct them into traffic.
- Repair cracked concrete on curb ramps as needed.

Photo 91: NW corner of Reid St. and Barlow Ave looking south – Areas with cracked concrete



Photo 92: NW corner of Reid St. and Barlow Ave looking east – Cracked concrete at transition between curb ramp and crosswalk



Photo 93: SW corner of Reid and Barlow



Photo 94: Cracked concrete at SW corner



Photo 95: Fire Hydrant is awkwardly positioned but there is sufficient space for someone to get around it. There is also cracked concrete in this area



Photo 96: NE corner of Reid St and Barlow Ave looking south - Curb ramp with cracked concrete



Photo 97: NE corner of Reid St. and Barlow Ave looking west – Cracked concrete



- The crosswalk between Scotiabank and Willis Harper has a curb ramp in one area and a drop off in another area by the car stop line. Because the car stop line goes across the entire street, it is difficult to distinguish the crosswalk from the car stop line and there is a risk of someone rolling off the wrong section. This can be addressed by either fixing the painting of the car stop line or adding zebra stripes to the crosswalk to make it more prominent.

Photo 98: SW Corner of Reid St. and Barlow Ave



Photo 99: Crosswalk connecting Scotiabank to Willis Harper (Home Hardware)



- Improve the colour contrast of the grey pebbled planting bed so that it is easier to distinguish from the surroundings.

Photo 100: Bench in front of Scotiabank



Photo 101: Improve colour contrast of pebbled planting bed



Reid St between Barlow Ave and Carson Ave – West Side of Street

Things done well:

- The sidewalk is spacious and allows enough space for two people using mobility devices to pass by one another;
- There is a new stretch of sidewalk with excellent transitions between the different sections of concrete.

Photo 102: New sections of concrete sidewalk (Bell Store to Integris Credit Union)



Photo 103: Combination of garbage bin and pole narrow path of travel



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Consider moving the garbage bin by Service Canada to another location that is not directly by a street light pole (which also narrows the path of travel);
- Fix cracked pavement as needed;

Photo 104: Freeze thaw action caused cracked pavement where pole was removed.



- Work with businesses to address abrupt changes in elevation at the transitions between the City sidewalks and the building frontage zones because they are hazardous and obstruct the accessible path of travel;
- In the interim, consider using bright yellow paint to warn people (including people with visual disabilities) about areas where there is an abrupt change in elevation;

Photo 105: Abrupt transition by Keen's Sports -- could use yellow paint to improve visibility



Photo 106: Drop off in front of Carter's Jewelers



Photo 107: Dip in concrete by Fraser Broughton CPA Office



- Add brightly colored tactile indicators to warn people with visual disabilities about the alley;
- Explore the feasibility of paving the City parking lot by Quesnel Music and providing accessible parking.

Photo 108: The alley may create a hazard for people with low vision because there is limited tactile and visual warning of it



Photo 109: Gravel parking lot by Quesnel Music



Reid St between Barlow Ave and Carson Ave – East Side of Street

Things done well:

- The sidewalk is spacious and allows enough space for two people using mobility devices to pass by one another;
- There is a new stretch of sidewalk with excellent transitions between the different sections of concrete.

Photo 110: Cracked concrete by Chevron gas station



Photo 111: New section of concrete by Chevron Station



Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Fix cracked pavement as needed;

Photo 112: Cracked concrete in front of Autoplan Insurance



Photo 113: Cracked concrete by Quesnel Chiropractic



Photo 114: Cracked and rough pavement by Willis Harper



Photo 115: Puddle forming by Willis Harper



- Address drainage issues where puddles form and ice over during winter;
- Remove sandwich boards that are in the public right-of-way;

Photo 116: Sandwich boards obstruct the accessible path of travel



- Work in collaboration with businesses to address abrupt changes in elevation (at the transition between the City sidewalks and the building frontage zone) that can be hazardous and obstruct the accessible of travel;
- In the interim, bright yellow paint could be used to warn people (including people with visual disabilities) about areas where there is an abrupt change in elevation;

Photo 117: Abrupt change in elevation in front of Telus Store



Photo 118: Abrupt change in elevation in front of ABC Communications



- Move the disability parking space over so that people are less likely to park in the accessible transfer area.

Photo 119: Accessible parking space by ABC Communications and Pure Spice restaurant



Photo 120: Space that should not be used as a parking spot that people try to park in anyway and block the accessible transfer aisle



Intersection of Reid St and Carson Ave (Highway 97)

During our audit, we also visited the intersection of Reid Street and Carson Ave which is an area that partially falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Highways because Carson Ave is part of Highway 97. While this intersection is on the periphery of the downtown Reid St commercial area, it is also likely to be well used by visitors to Quesnel who may walk along Carson Ave to get to the Tourist Info Centre, the Riverfront walking routes, the Barkerville Brewery, shops on Carson Ave and the pedestrian bridge to West Quesnel.

Some of the curb ramps here are very poorly designed. It is recommended that the City advocate to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for improvements to this intersection that fall within provincial jurisdiction and address accessibility barriers which fall within City jurisdiction.

Things done well:

- There are pedestrian controlled crossing signals that pedestrians can activate;
- The crosswalks are well marked.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility:

- Provide curb ramps in areas that currently lack a curb ramp;
- Smooth transitions between curb ramps and street level;
- Fix areas with broken/cracked pavement;
- Explore the feasibility of upgrading the technology used for the pedestrian controlled crosswalks to make pedestrian controlled signals more accessible for people who are blind or people who are deaf/Hard of Hearing;
- Incorporate tactile signals to guide people with visual disabilities and warn them about the intersections;
- Explore ways to make the heritage walk more accessible for people with visual disabilities (e.g. audio tour with Visitor Info centre, Braille signage)

Photo 121: NE corner of Reid St and Carson Ave (looking west) with rough pavement



Photo 122: NE corner of Reid St and Carson Ave (looking south) with rough, cracked pavement and lacks tactile indicators for people with low vision



Photo 123: SE corner of Reid St. and Carson Ave -- lacks proper curb ramp



Photo 124: Pedestrian push buttons on SE corner



Photo 125: SE corner of Reid St and Carson Ave (facing west) has heritage walk foot prints



Photo 126: SW corner of Reid St and Carson Ave lacks proper curb ramp



Photo 127: Pedestrian push buttons and crosswalk countdown timer on SW corner of Reid St. and Carson Ave



Photo 128: SW corner of Reid St. and Carson Ave -- There is no curb ramp



Photo 129: NW corner of Reid St and Carson Ave -- Lacks proper curb ramps



Photo 130: Pedestrian push button at NW corner of Reid St and Carson Ave – Older style of push button



7.2 Alleys Alongside Reid Street

Because Reid St. is a one-way street, many cars driving along Reid Street will use the alleyways that are located immediately to the west and to the east to park or turn around and change direction. Because this is an important aspect of Reid St. traffic patterns, the SPARC BC team was asked to consider the alleys as part of the pedestrian network.

While the alleyways serve as an important vehicular travel route, they are not particularly pedestrian friendly. Some challenges with the alleyways include:

- The high level of vehicular traffic;
- The lack of a sidewalk or demarcated pedestrian walkway;
- The fact that there is parking on both sides of the alleyways makes it difficult to find a place for a safe pedestrian route that is not obstructed by vehicular traffic;
- Broken asphalt and puddles which would ice over in winter.

Alley – West of Reid St between St. Laurent Ave and Barlow Ave

Photo 131: View of Alley looking north from Barlow Ave



Photo 132: Broken pavement and puddles in alley



Photo 133: High traffic area with parking lots and popular businesses such as Tim Hortons



Photo 134: Rear parking at Granville Coffee where cars would have to drive across pedestrian pathway (if created)



Photo 135: View of Alley from St. Laurent Ave looking south with many parking lots



Alley – East of Reid St between St. Laurent Ave and Barlow Ave

Photo 136: View of alley looking south from St. Laurent Ave -- Very busy with lots of traffic



Photo 137: View of alley from Barlow Ave towards St. Laurent Ave



7.3 St. Laurent Ave

St. Laurent Ave was outside of the primary scope of the audit but was visited by the audit team because it was identified to be an important commercial street which connects Reid St, City Hall and Dunrovin Park Lodge Care Facility, a long term care complex operated by Northern Health, where a large number of seniors with mobility limitations live.

Things done well:

- Newer curb ramps incorporate tactile directional lines for people with low vision;
- Some curb ramps are well aligned with crosswalks;
- There is transit service as well as a sheltered bus stop that provides space for people to sit and rest;
- There are benches available.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility along St. Laurent Ave:

- Consider replacing cobblestone/interlocking paver surfaces with concrete which is a smoother, more slip resistant surface;
- When replacing sidewalk sections, ensure that there are smooth transitions between concrete sections (similar to the newer sections along Reid Street);
- Improve the color contrast of concrete planter beds with surroundings;
- Use tactile warning indicators to warn pedestrians with visual disabilities about alleyways, curb ramps and crosswalks;
- Smooth transitions between curb ramps and street level to avoid dips/lips;
- When replacing curb ramps, work to provide curb ramps with more gradual inclines that are easier for people with disabilities to use safely and independently;
- Align curb ramps with crosswalks where needed.

St. Laurent Ave between Reid St and McLean St

Photo 138: Newer sidewalk—Transitions between concrete sections are not as smooth as other new sidewalks sections



Photos 139: Unmarked Alleyway for people with visual disabilities



Photo 140: Cobblestones by McLean and St. Laurent Ave can be a hazard



Photo 141: Covered bus stop by St. Laurent across from Shoppers with space to sit and rest



Intersection of St. Laurent Ave and McLean St

Photos 142: Crosswalk at St. Laurent and McLean (view from Northwest corner looking East) – Cobblestone surface can be a barrier, tactile lines help to guide people with visual disabilities



Photo 143: Crosswalk at St. Laurent and McLean (view from Northeast corner) looking west towards Dairy Queen with tactile lines



Photo 144: Crosswalk across St. Laurent Ave at McLean Street (looking north toward Dairy Queen) from the SW corner with tactile lines



Photo 145: Crosswalk along St. Laurent at McLean Street (looking south towards Edward Jones from NE corner) with tactile lines



Photo 146: Crosswalk at St. Laurent and McLean (from the SE corner looking west)



St. Laurent Ave between McLean St and Kinchant St

Photo 147: St. Laurent – Heading east Cobblestones and interlocking pavers can be an issue. There is also limited colour contrast with grey planters in front of Super Suds Laundromat & Dry Cleaners



Photo 148: Benches improve access along St. Laurent Ave



Photo 149: Heading east on north side sidewalk of St. Laurent towards the Ramada – new sidewalk with abrupt transitions in between concrete sections



Photo 150: Limited warning about alley in front of Ramada for people with visual disabilities & challenging cross slope



Intersection of St. Laurent Ave and Kinchant St

Photo 151: More interlocking pavers/cobblestones at the intersection of Kinchant St and St. Laurent (NW corner)



Photo 152: Intersection at St. Laurent and Kinchant – View from NW corner looking east towards the library



Photo 153: More cobblestones in front of the library



Photo 154: Curb ramps lack tactile/visual guides for people with visual disabilities



Photo 155: St. Laurent Ave and Kinchant St intersection (looking westward from the SE corner) – tactile lines help to guide people with low vision



Photo 156: Kinchant Street and St. Laurent (looking north toward the library) – tactile lines



Photo 157: Kinchant Street and St. Laurent (curb on the SW corner with tactile lines)



Photo 158: Looking north from the SW corner of Kinchant St and St. Laurent (curb with tactile lines)



St. Laurent Ave between Kinchant St and Vaughan St

Photo 159: View of the hill heading east up St. Laurent from the Library looking east



Photo 160: Bus stop at St. Laurent – Steep hill leading down St. Laurent



Photo 161: The bus stop located on hill



Photo 162: Curb ramp on south side very steep -- Alison had to back down it & pole narrows pathway



Photo 163: Bottom of St. Laurent Ave hill (between Kinchant and Vaughan) – hedge narrows pathway to about 4 feet



Photo 164: Cobblestone/interlocking pavers at St. Laurent Ave and Kinchant St



Intersection of St. Laurent Ave and Vaughan St

Photo 165: Steep intersection at Vaughan and St. Laurent – Looking east from NE corner



Photo 166: Crosswalk at Vaughan and St. Laurent (looking south) does not line up with curb ramp



Photo 167: Bad curb ramp at NW corner at St. Laurent and Vaughan



Photo 168: View of bus stop located downhill from NW corner at St. Laurent and Vaughan



Photo 169: St. Laurent and Vaughan Street (curb ramps at NE corner) – Challenging dips/lips at transition between curb and street



Photo 170: View of crosswalk at St. Laurent and Vaughan – does not line up with curb ramp and cracked pavement (view from NE corner looking south)



Photos 171: Steep curb ramp at Vaughan St and St. Laurent Ave located by bus stop (Note: people using manual wheelchairs may need help to navigate these steep curb ramps)



Photo 172: SE Curb has significant incline and dips/lips at the transition point

Photo 173: Looking towards City Hall (looking northwest) from the SW corner of St. Laurent and Vaughan



Photos 174: St. Laurent Ave and Vaughan St (on the SW corner) – Cracked concrete and steep lip/dips



St. Laurent Ave between Vaughan Street and Callanan St

Photo 175: Heading up the steep hill eastward on north side



Photo 176: Lack of tactile warning in alley for people with low vision



Photo 177: Heading Westward on St. Laurent on south side from Callanan; After Callanan – very steep downhill



Photo 178: Bus Stop on St. Laurent between Callanan and Vaughan



Photo 179: Challenging cross slopes heading downhill on south side



Intersection of St. Laurent Ave and Callanan St

Photo 180: NW Corner of St. Laurent Ave and Callanan St. looking east – rough pavement & lip/dip at transition



Photo 181: looking south across St. Laurent from the NW corner of St. Laurent and Callanan St – curb ramp does not line up with crosswalk



Photo 182: Very steep curb (NE Corner) with no tactile warnings for people with visual disabilities



Photo 183: St. Laurent and Callanan Street – Looking south from the NE corner at cross walk going across St. Laurent – rough/broken concrete



Photo 184: Intersection at Callanan and St. Laurent (the SE corner) – lacks tactile warnings for people with low vision



Photo 185: Same intersection (the SE corner) with dip/lip at transition between curb & street



Photo 186: Same intersection the SW corner



Photo 187: Crosswalk going across St. Laurent Street (view from SW corner)



St. Laurent Ave between Callanan St and Wilson St

Photo 188: Heading east along St. Laurent on the north side of the street – Good new crosswalk between Callanan St and Wilson St with smooth transitions



Photo 189: Unmarked driveway with cross slope



Photo 190: Heading westward on south side of street – Cross slopes



Intersection of St. Laurent Ave and Wilson St

Photos 191: Intersection at St. Laurent and Wilson – Looking east from the NW corner – Dip/lip and cracked pavement



Photo 192: Wilson St and St. Laurent Ave (looking south from NE corner) – Rough concrete



Photo 193: Steep curbs on the NE corner



Photo 194: View from NE corner looking south -- Crosswalk does not line up with bus stop



Photo 195: Extend painted yellow area to provide enough space for bus



Photo 196: Looking westward at the SE corner of St. Laurent and Wilson – lip/dip at transition

Photo 197: St. Laurent and Wilson Intersection (curb ramps at the SW corner) – lip/dip at transition



St. Laurent Ave between Wilson St and Jones St

Photos 198: There is an alley between Wilson and Jones on St. Laurent – very steep curb with rough concrete



Photo 199: Heading westward on south side of street – new smooth concrete section



Photo 200: Very bad cross slope between Wilson St and James St



Intersection of St. Laurent Ave and Jones St

Photo 201: Jones St and St. Laurent Ave Intersection – View from NW curb looking east



Photo 202: Jones Street and St. Laurent intersection – curb at NW corner



Photo 203: St. Laurent Ave and Jones St – View of crosswalk across St. Laurent from NW corner looking south



Photo 204: St. Laurent Ave and Jones St – SE corner looking westward – rough concrete



Photo 205: Jones St and St. Laurent SE corner – lip/dip



Photo 206: View of crosswalk across St. Laurent from the SW corner – lacks tactile warnings



Photo 207: NE corner of Jones St and St. Laurent Ave – lip/dip at transition between curb and street & lacks tactile warnings



St. Laurent Ave between Jones St and Dunrovin Park Lodge

Photo 208: End of St. Laurent Ave sidewalk where it approaches Dunrovin Park Lodge Long term care residence



Photo 209: Heading westward on St. Laurent Ave. away from Dunrovin Park Lodge on the south side – unmarked driveways and curb ramps



7.4 Barlow Ave

Barlow Ave was outside of the primary scope of the audit but was visited by the audit team because it was identified as a community priority and it connects Reid Street to a popular tourist attraction, the Billy Barker Casino.

Things done well:

- New sidewalk sections have smooth transitions between concrete sections;
- Areas where the trees encroach on the accessible path of travel are often adjacent to clear space which allow a person using a mobility device to navigate around the trees.

Opportunities to enhance accessibility along Barlow Ave:

- Repair cracked pavement as needed;
- Replace tree grates with more accessible tree grates that have smaller openings and are less hazardous for people using mobility devices;
- Use tactile warning indicators to warn pedestrians with visual disabilities about alleyways, curb ramps and crosswalks;
- Smooth transitions between curb ramps and street level to avoid dips/lips;
- Explore ways to improve drainage where puddles/ice accumulate.

Barlow Ave between Reid St and McLean St

Photo 210: Trees on Barlow Street narrow path. Hedge also needs to be trimmed



Photo 211: Cracked pavement by alley



Photo 212: Tree by Barlow and McLean – Tree narrows sidewalk path



Photo 213: McLean and Barlow heading back towards Reid – three trees narrow the pathway



Photo 214: Looking eastward towards the provincial office – tree grates are inaccessible



Photo 215: Alley behind Home Hard Ware is very High Traffic – no tactile warning



Photo 216: In front of Home Hardware there is a puddle that is at risk of icing



Intersection of Barlow Ave and McLean St

Photo 217: NE corner of Barlow Ave and McLean St by Billy Barker Casino – the pole blocks visibility, there is a lip/dip on the curb ramp, no tactile warnings for people with low vision



Photo 218: View of McLean St looking north with a nice new section of sidewalk with smooth transitions



Photo 219: Crossing Barlow Ave from the Casino towards the Provincial Office – Cracked pavement



Photo 220: SE corner – Dip/Lip in transition & no tactile warnings



Photo 221: Parking stalls by provincial office are well designed



7.5 Front Street (HWY 97)

Front Street is part of Highway 97 which partly falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. The audit team visited it because it was identified to be an important part of the downtown pedestrian streetscape. It is recommended that the City of Quesnel work in collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to:

- Repair cracked pavement as needed;
- Add pedestrian push buttons in areas without existing pedestrian controlled crosswalks;
- Use tactile warning indicators to warn pedestrians with visual disabilities about alleyways, curb ramps and crosswalks;
- Smooth transitions between curb ramps and street level to avoid dips/lips.

Intersection of Front Street and Shepherd Ave

Photos 222: Northeast corner of Front St and Shepherd Ave – No pedestrian push button at crosswalk heading across Front Street; broken curb ramp that has a dip/lip



Photo 223: Looking south from NE corner



Photo 224: Southeast corner has a better curb ramp and push button but lacks tactile indicators for people with low vision



Front St between Shepherd Ave and St. Laurent Ave

Photo 225: Looking south on the eastern side of the street – broken sidewalk sections



Photo 226: Heading south (on the western side of the street) there is a broken sidewalk that narrows the pathway – still about 14220 mm wide, more broken sidewalks



St. Laurent and Front Street Intersection

Photos 227: St. Laurent St and Front St northwest corner – Can only cross on the north side; good curb ramp; push button is at located at a good height; lacks tactile warnings for people with low vision





Photo 228: Looking East towards Safeway – crosswalk with countdown timer

Photo 229: Curb ramp on Safeway side has rough pavement and lacks tactile indicators



Photo 230: Crosswalk – looking south (from NW corner by Safeway) – rough/broken pavement and lacks tactile warnings



Photo 231: Curb ramp on the other side by Mini Japan – Abrupt transition



Photo 232: The push button by the Mini Japan



Front Street Between St. Laurent and Barlow

Photos 233: Heading south on the eastern side of street; Good new sidewalk by Tim Hortons



Photos 234: There is a drop off zone by the Holly Clinic – Needs to be better marked to warn people about the curb ramp



Photo 235: Sidewalk narrows by James Dean Tatz



Photo 236: Front Street and Barlow – There is no crosswalk on the City Side

