



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

Policy Title: **Accessibility Policy**
Approved By: **Council Motion #0134-21**
Effective Date: **August 24, 2021**

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The City of Yellowknife is a welcoming, inclusive, and prosperous community with a strong sense of pride in our unique history, culture and natural beauty. Accessibility is fundamental to the quality of life, well-being, and engagement of people with disabilities in an inclusive society.

The City is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive city where all residents have the opportunity to take part in the social, economic and cultural life of the City.

The City of Yellowknife recognizes and upholds the principles of the following international, federal, and territorial legislation:

- The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was ratified by the Government of Canada in 2010. This international human rights instrument is intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Parties to the Convention are required to promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights of persons with disabilities, including full equality under the law (Government of Canada, 2010);
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations which states that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world..." (United Nations Doc. A/810, 1948);
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which states that "every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability" (*The Constitution Act, 1982*, Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982* (UK), 1982, c 11, s 15(1));



- The *Canadian Human Rights Act* which gives effect to the principle “that all individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have and to have their needs accommodated, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered” (*Canadian Human Rights Act*, RSC 1985, c H-6;
- The *Accessible Canada Act* which aims to proactively and systemically “benefit all persons, especially persons with disabilities, through the realization...of a Canada without barriers on or before January 1, 2040.” The *Act* is to be carried out according to the following principles:
 - a) all persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities;
 - b) all persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have regardless of their disabilities;
 - c) all persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities;
 - d) all persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities;
 - e) laws, policies, programs, services and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination faced by persons;
 - f) persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures; and
 - g) the development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities.



(*Accessible Canada Act*, SC 2019, c 10); and

- The Northwest Territories *Human Rights Act* which provides that it is against the law to discriminate against individuals (or classes of individuals) in the areas of employment, membership in professional organizations, workers' associations or trade unions, access to goods, services, accommodation or facilities that are customarily available to the public, tenancy, and published material. Prohibited grounds of discrimination are: race, colour, ancestry, nationality, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, family affiliation, political belief, political association, social condition and a conviction that is subject to a pardon or record suspension (*Human Rights Act*, SNWT 2002, c 18,).

Furthermore, pursuant to the *Human Rights Act*, protection from discrimination on the basis of disability includes protection of an individual from discrimination on the basis that they (a) has or had a disability, (b) is believed to have or have had a disability, and (c) has or is believed to have a predisposition to developing a disability.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the City of Yellowknife's commitment to make accessibility an integral part of the City's social, cultural, economic, and political fabric, so all persons may meaningfully participate in and contribute to civic life in the City of Yellowknife. This policy confirms the City's commitment to:

- ensuring equal access and participation for all residents of the City of Yellowknife, regardless of their abilities;
- treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence; and
- identifying, removing, and preventing physical, social, cultural and systemic barriers that create exclusion.

3 POLICY

The City of Yellowknife is committed to providing a barrier-free, accessible environment in which all people can access City services, programs, facilities, public spaces, and information and communication, in a way that meets their individual needs. In doing so, the City is committed to equal opportunity for all Yellowknife residents, and ensuring that people with disabilities have access to City-owned and operated programs, services and



spaces in ways that are free from discrimination, and respect individual dignity and independence.

To meet its commitments in accordance with this policy, the City of Yellowknife will focus on the following key areas:

- a) working towards the reduction and elimination of barriers to physical access to City-owned and operated programs, services, facilities and public spaces;
- b) recruiting, employing and training employees (including accessibility training) using Human Resource best practices that are equitable and free of biases and systemic barriers;
- c) working towards fully accessible public transit;
- d) ensuring City information-sharing and communication is accessible so that all people can receive, understand, and share such information, including City documents and web content;
- e) endeavouring to implement the recommendations respecting inclusive and accessible municipal emergency preparedness planning from the consultation report “On Thin Ice: Suggested Best Practices for Northern Emergency Planning”; and
- f) increasing engagement and consultation with persons with disabilities.

4 DEFINITIONS

In this Policy:

“Accessibility”	means the absence of barriers that prevent individuals or groups from fully participating in social, economic, cultural, and political aspects of society;
“Accessible”	means independent, equitable, and dignified access to information, programs, services, and public spaces for people with disabilities;



“Barrier”	means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including but not limited to a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, a technological barrier, or an attitudinal barrier;
“City”	means the Municipal Corporation of the City of Yellowknife;
“Disability”	means any of the following conditions, per the <i>Human Rights Act</i> , SNWT 2002, c.18: a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness, b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or language, d) a mental disorder;
“Discrimination”	means any behaviour, practice or policy which has a direct or adverse impact on a person based on any of the prohibited grounds under the <i>Human Rights Act</i> such as race, colour, ancestry, nationality, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, family status, family affiliation, political belief, political association, social condition and a conviction that is subject to a pardon or record suspension;
“Systemic Barriers”	means policies, practices or procedures that result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded.

5 APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all employees of the City of Yellowknife, City Council, and contractors providing service for or to the City.



6 REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years.