



# The Valemount Accessibility Plan Village of Valemount

September 2025

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Valemount is a small mountain village located in east-central British Columbia, where the Rocky, Monashee, and Cariboo Mountain ranges meet. Known for its stunning natural surroundings and friendly atmosphere, Valemount is a place where visitors and residents can enjoy a slower pace of life, with easy access to outdoor recreation throughout the year.

Tourism is a key part of the community, with opportunities for hiking, snowmobiling, mountain biking, and fishing right at your doorstep. Whether you're exploring nearby Mount Robson or spending a quiet weekend in town, Valemount offers a comfortable and accessible base for adventure. Local businesses, accommodations, and services strive to create a welcoming and easy-to-navigate experience for all.

With a population of just over 1,000, Valemount remains a close-knit and down-to-earth community. It's a place where people value nature, connection, and quality of life, whether you're here for a short visit or looking to make an extended stay.

## 1.1 VILLAGE OF VALEMOUNT ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

At the heart of an inclusive community is accessibility. The Valemount Accessibility Committee is committed to ensuring that everyone—regardless of age, ability, or circumstance—can fully participate in and enjoy all that our community has to offer. Accessibility is not just about physical spaces; it's about fostering equity, dignity, and independence for all. Together, let's continue building a Valemount where everyone belongs.

## 1.2 MESSAGE FROM MAYOR

The Valemount Accessibility Advisory Committee of Council was formed under the Accessible British Columbia Act. Dedicated members of this committee help our organization identify, fix, and prevent accessibility gaps. I've personally learned a lot about accessibility and how we can make our village more inclusive. It's essential to care for our community and residents, and we're doing our best to ensure everyone feels welcome and safe.



## 1.3 KEY CONTRIBUTORS

We want to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the development of this plan.

- Valemount Council
- Village Administration
- Accessibility Committee

## 2. DEFINITIONS

Village – The Village of Valemount

SPARC – Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia

Accessibility British Columbia Act – Passed in June 2021, intended to make the province more inclusive for people with disabilities by identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility.

## 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Village Accessibility Plan aims to chart a path forward to remove and prevent barriers in the Village, especially for persons with disabilities. This plan serves as the foundation on which Valemount will identify more specific actions in future versions. After first identifying barriers and determining initial actions, the Village will take steps to remove or prevent them.

The principle that persons with disabilities be involved in all stages of the design and implementation of the plan has been adopted. It will remain fundamental to the development of this plan and its evolution. Feedback mechanisms, including an anonymous form, are available to enable staff, community members, and the general public to continue contributing to this plan into the future.

This Accessibility Plan is based on internal and external consultations. Internally, the Accessibility Committee has identified barriers and is proactive in addressing them. The committee will continue to meet regularly as per the terms of reference. Ongoing consultations with the

community, subject matter experts, and authorities will help prioritize improvements in both the short and long term. This plan will be monitored and governed by the Accessibility Committee every quarter.

## 4. FRAMEWORK GUIDING OUR PLAN

### 4.1 ACCESSIBLE BRITISH COLUMBIA ACT PRINCIPLES

The Accessible British Columbia Act was enacted in June 2021. The Accessible British Columbia Regulation came into force on September 1, 2022. These regulations designate municipalities as accessible organizations. As of September 1, 2023, municipalities will be required to have the following in place: an accessibility committee and an accessibility plan.

The overarching principle of the Accessibility Plan is that persons with disabilities are involved in all stages of the plan's design and implementation, as well as in all initiatives and activities of the Village. By engaging those who face the most persistent barriers and embracing intersectional perspectives and lived experiences, everyone will benefit. This plan is based on six sub-principles:

**Inclusion** - All British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, should be able to participate fully and equally in their communities.

**Adaptability** - Accessibility plans should reflect that disability and accessibility are evolving concepts that change as services, technology, and attitudes change.

**Diversity** - Every person is unique. Accessibility plans should acknowledge the principle of intersectionality and the diversity within the disability community.

**Transparency and collaboration** - The Village will operate openly, through collaborative and inclusive means. Our efforts, progress and challenges will be shared across the organization and with our community.

**Flexibility and innovation** - The Village will explore all options to maintain an ever-evolving plan and reach its objectives.

**Sound Stewardship** - The Village will support sound stewardship of public funds through transparent and coordinated governance and decision-making processes.

## 4.2 EXISTING POLICIES

The Committee encourages Council to incorporate accessibility requirements into the Village's Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw, as well as other bylaws and policies, as they are completed. The Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaws are slated for renewal in 2028-2029.

## 4.3 OUR APPROACH

In December 2024 and January 2025, the Village conducted a survey, available in both online and print forms, to gather information regarding accessibility barriers within municipally owned buildings. In May 2025, the Committee members also took the opportunity to do a physical walk/drive around the Village. This 'field trip' provided the members with a chance to assess the building, pathways, parks, trails, and recreation sites, and to provide feedback on accessibility.

# 5. ABOUT OUR COMMITTEE

## 1. Initial Focus of Committee

The Committee focused on identifying barriers in the following areas:

- Village infrastructure, including municipal buildings, pathways, sidewalks and recreational areas;
- Village communication channels; and
- Resident inclusion.

## 2. About the Committee

The Village advertised in the local paper, on social media, and other public notice avenues to recruit committee members. From these initiatives, five applications were received to join the Accessibility Committee. The council appointed four members to the committee.

The committee comprises the general public, including at least two individuals with disabilities, one senior, and one Indigenous person. At least half of the members will be individuals with disabilities.

## 6. CONSULTATION

- Accessibility Survey
  - Online and paper copies of the “Accessibility Survey” were available in December 2024 and January 2025. Notice of the survey was distributed through newspaper advertisements, the Village newsletter, the Village website, and social media.
  - Key discussions collected from the surveys focus on physical access in municipal-owned buildings. Heavy, cracked, or uneven sidewalks; lack of sidewalks; lack of curb cutouts; uneven pavement; and non-electric entrance doors.
  - Check Appendix “A” for the summary of the Accessibility Survey results.
- Field Trip
  - The Village staff and the Accessibility Committee members conducted a field trip in May 2025.
  - Check Appendix “B” for the summary of the Field Trip results.

## 7. FEEDBACK MECHANISM

Feedback will be received by the Village staff and reviewed periodically for consideration and possible inclusion in plans, policies, and bylaws. The Village website features a dedicated Accessibility page, where information about the plan will be posted (<https://valemount.ca/accessibility-committee/>). The webpage provides a feedback form for reporting accessibility issues or submitting comments.

## 8. ACTION PLAN

LOCATION	BARRIERS	ACTION	PRIORITY
Centennial Park	No ramp to the bathrooms	Build a ramp from the park to the bathroom on the current walkway	Short-term
	No accessible playground equipment	Purchase and install accessible equipment for the playground, including surfacing and pathway.	Short-term
	No accessible picnic tables	Add a ledge to make picnic tables accessible for wheelchair users	Short-term
Museum Annex	High steps into the annex	Alter the current ramp to a better location and widen it for easier access. Add a ramp to the door.	Medium-term
The Village Office	The automatic interior door to the Village Office is not working	Repair and replace the automatic door opener	Long-term
Review Snow Removal Policy	The policy does not consider accessibility or designate the width of snow clearing for sidewalks	Review the policy for necessary changes and review regularly.	Medium-term
Bigfoot Trail	Needs better signage that signals the trail and lighting along dark areas, i.e. by the park and cemetery	Spray painting bigfoot steps on the trail.	Long-term
		Add lighting to dark areas.	
Community Hall	The ramp to the inside of the building is too narrow, steep, and long for manual wheelchairs or walkers	Include accessibility in the master plan for a future building	Long-term

LOCATION	BARRIERS	ACTION	PRIORITY
Sportsplex	Bathrooms are difficult to access as they have a high step	Include accessibility in the master plan for future buildings/facilities	Long-term
	The bathroom stall doors are not wide enough for a wheelchair		Long-term
	A big step right before the bleachers		Long-term
	A big step to the beer garden and bandstand		Long-term
	Entrance and parking pathways are around the park, which makes it a long route		Long-term
John Osadchuk Park	Bathroom stalls are too narrow for a wheelchair, and no automatic door	Determine the necessity of improvements based on usage.	Long-term
	No ramp to the concession and washrooms	Construction of a ramp to access the concession and washrooms	Long-term

- **Short-term priority:** These are urgent issues that need immediate attention. They impact safety, fundamental access, or essential amenities (e.g., wheelchair ramps, accessible bathrooms). Approximately 1 year.
- **Medium-term priority:** These are important but not urgent improvements. They enhance accessibility but do not pose an immediate barrier (e.g., better signage, picnic table modifications).
- **Long-term priority:** These are future-focused improvements that support overall accessibility over time. They may require significant funding or planning (e.g., major infrastructure changes, park-wide accessibility enhancements).

## 9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

**Monitoring** – Village staff will monitor the priorities outlined in this plan. Further, staff will monitor complaints received through the Village website or in person. A report will be delivered periodically to the Accessibility Committee about the complaints and feedback.

**Evaluating** – The Village will conduct a review and evaluation of the accessibility plan every three years from adoption. The Plan will also be made public on our website.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The Village is committed to removing barriers that are identified within the community. Feedback from citizens is essential and will be a valuable tool for staff and the Council to refer to during annual budget and capital project planning discussions.

The Village would like to acknowledge the commitment of and express sincere gratitude to the members of the Accessibility Committee. The members, through their own experiences, provided invaluable insight into the difficulties and frustrations that those living with diverse abilities face daily. Their time, expertise, compassion, empathy, and personal experience provided the foundation for this plan. It assisted in bringing it to the attention of the Village staff and Council as a valuable reference tool for future budget considerations.

# APPENDIX “A”

## SUMMARY OF ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

### SURVEY OVERVIEW:

- Conducted from December 9, 2024, to January 1, 2025
- Total Participants: 12 community members
- Demographics: The Majority of respondents were permanent residents of Valemount, with most falling in the 25-34 age range

### KEY ACCESSIBILITY CONCERNS:

- Many businesses lack electric doors, making entry and exit difficult
- Limited sidewalks & streetlights make walking dangerous, especially in winter
- Museum & Library: Space limitations make maneuvering difficult

### Challenges in Village Recreation Areas:

- Bigfoot Trail: Uneven surfaces, gaps, unsafe railroad crossings
- Sportsplex: Raised concrete pad near bleachers limits accessibility
- Centennial Park & John Osadchuk Park: Rough terrain, mobility barriers
- Poor lighting & maintenance in parks and trails

### Common Sidewalk & Curb Ramp Issues:

- Community Hall: Ramp is too long, steep turns, tricky doors, and unsafe stairs
- Most reported issue: Bumpy transitions at curb ramps
- Missing curb ramps, steep ramps, and slippery surfaces are also concerns
- Objects blocking sidewalks, including parked cars and fixed structures

### General Navigation Challenges in Valemount:

- Winter hazards: Snow and ice buildup create risks for wheelchair users
- Sidewalks suddenly ending force pedestrians into traffic
- Unpaved roads & uneven surfaces make mobility difficult
- Limited accessible parking and poor crosswalk visibility near key areas

**Community Recommendations:**

- Install automatic doors at public buildings
- Improve sidewalk and curb infrastructure
- Increase street lighting and crosswalk safety measures

# APPENDIX “B”

## SUMMARY OF FIELD TRIP

### FIELD TRIP OVERVIEW:

- Conducted on May 6, 2025
- The Village staff- Krista Ety, Planner and Jasleen Kaur Parmar, Finance Clerk.
- The Accessibility Committee - Judy Holmin, Shanon Manahan and Sherry Tinsley.

### COMMENTS:

**Big Foot Trail:** More signage is suggested, possibly in the form of spray-painted footprints or guided shoulders and lighting.

**Centennial Park:** A ramp is needed for access to the washrooms. Picnic tables should have an added ledge. Play equipment requires matting and better pathways. The entry gate is accessible, but the benches are not.

**Community Hall:** Ramp is too narrow, steep, and long for non-power wheelchairs. A lift was suggested. Accessibility standards should be incorporated into plans through consultation with the Accessibility Committee. The bathrooms and top platform are not wheelchair-accessible, but the kitchen and parking areas are.

**Downtown (5th Avenue Corridor):** No concerns reported.

**John Osadchuk Park:** No ramps for bathrooms or covered areas. The ground is uneven, making entry difficult. Large step-ups and non-accessible washrooms were noted.

**Library:** No concerns reported.

**Museum:** Limited accessibility, with a non-accessible annex. The step at the entrance should be improved. Accessible bathroom available.

**Sportsplex:** No accessible bleachers, washrooms, beer gardens, or bandstand seating. Accessible picnic tables were suggested. The ground is level, but the field is not flat.