

## NEWS RELEASE

Distributed May 23, 2025

### **City of Nanaimo celebrates progress during National AccessAbility Week**

*From facility upgrades to virtual public art tours, the City highlights major strides toward a more inclusive, accessible community for all residents.*

#### **Summary**

In recognition of National AccessAbility Week (May 25–31, 2025), the City of Nanaimo is celebrating the progress made in creating a more accessible and inclusive community — particularly for residents living with disabilities. The City remains committed to identifying, removing and preventing barriers that limit access to services, amenities and public life. Ensuring equitable participation in all aspects of City life is essential to building a welcoming and inclusive Nanaimo.

The Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) has played a vital role in shaping inclusive City policies, infrastructure and programming. Over the past year, the committee provided input on several key initiatives, including accessible washroom upgrades and improved signage at Westwood Lake, enhanced accessible parking across the city and a redesigned parking lot at Neck Point Park. ACAI also contributed to inclusive practices at City-hosted events and offered recommendations for form and character development permit guidelines to support inclusive design in future developments.

Nanaimo's Parks, Recreation & Culture department continues to champion inclusive programming and facility improvements. Over the past year, staff have received inclusive aquatics training and programs like Therapy Aquafit remain a priority, alongside partnerships with organizations like Special Olympics BC and the Canucks Autism Network. The City has also installed Mobi-Mats® at Colliery Dam Park, Neck Point Park and Loudon Park, expanding seasonal beach access for individuals using wheelchairs, strollers and other wheeled devices. These accessible walkways, made from recycled materials, build on the success of the original mat at Departure Bay Beach, which was upgraded with a resting area.

Another major highlight this year includes the completion of Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility recommendations at Bowen Park, the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre and Frank Crane Arena. New audits are also completed at Oliver Woods Community Centre, Beban Park Pool, Cliff McNabb Arena and Nanaimo Ice Centre to identify further improvements. Culturally, the City is developing interactive public art maps and virtual tours, featuring Mural Art, Indigenous Art and more, allowing residents and visitors to explore Nanaimo's creative spaces both online and in person.

Numerous City-wide initiatives are enhancing accessibility beyond recreation. Assistive hearing devices have been installed at all recreation front counters thanks to a SPARC BC grant. The City has also made pedestrian infrastructure improvements, including tactile sidewalk indicators and audible crosswalk signals. Digital accessibility has advanced with clearer navigation and plain language on the City's website, and residents are encouraged to share feedback using the [Accessibility and Inclusion Feedback Form](#). Transportation access has expanded with HandyDart passes now available at all five recreation centres. Active transportation infrastructure continues to grow under the City's "Complete Streets" approach and projects like Midtown Gateway.

To learn more about how the City of Nanaimo is working toward accessibility and inclusiveness, visit the [Accessibility and Inclusion page](#) on [www.nanaimo.ca](http://www.nanaimo.ca).

**Strategic Link:** Through accessible infrastructure and inclusive programming, the City is removing barriers and ensuring all residents can participate fully in community life.

## Key Points

- ACAI helped guide accessibility improvements in parks, events, parking, and development guidelines, ensuring City spaces are inclusive and welcoming.
- Initiatives such as installing assistive hearing devices, offering HandyDart passes at recreation centres and hosting inclusive events like the Youth Dance reflect the City's commitment to accessible community engagement.
- New interactive online maps and themed virtual tours are being developed to make Nanaimo's public art collection more accessible, allowing residents and visitors to explore art both in person and virtually.

## Quotes

"Building an inclusive Nanaimo means recognizing and removing the barriers that prevent residents from fully participating in community life. During National AccessAbility Week, we reflect on the work that's been done and recommit to the path forward, where every resident feels welcomed, respected and supported."

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

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