

2024 Accessibility feedback data

Analysis report

This report covers public feedback regarding the City of Prince George 2023-2026 Accessibility Work Plan. It identifies accessibility issues that limit full participation in society & provides an update on the progress made in addressing these barriers, as reported to the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion.

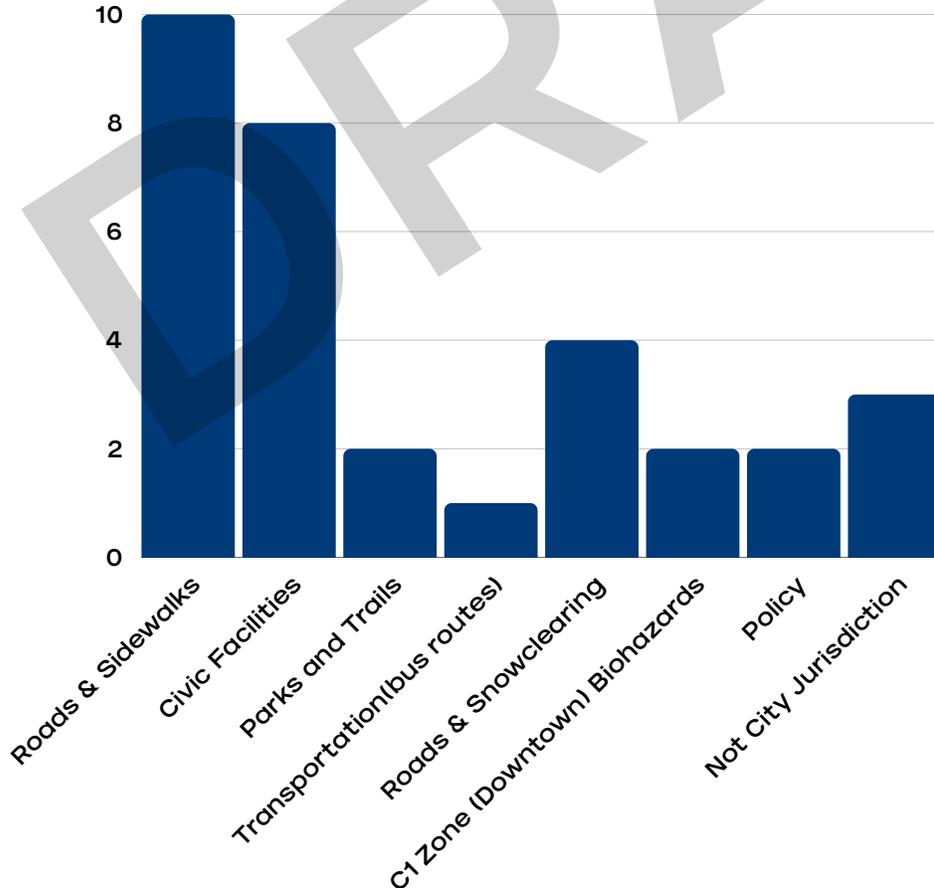
Date feedback collected:
January 18-
September 9, 2024



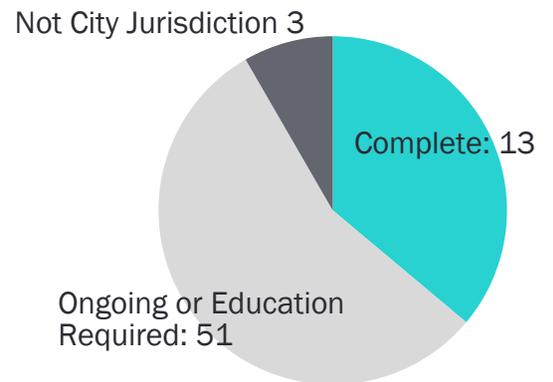
Key metrics



Top service requests by category



Action breakdown on the 67 service requests



Requests are sent to the appropriate division for review.

The response will depend on several factors, including the nature of the request and its potential impact on the City's budget and available resources.

Background & method

In 2021, the Government of British Columbia enacted the Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA), followed by the Accessible British Columbia Regulation, which designates municipalities as accessible organizations. As part of this regulation, municipalities are required to establish an Accessibility Committee, develop an Accessibility Plan, and implement a tool to receive public feedback.

Public feedback tool/process

The ABCA mandates that a process be established for gathering public feedback on the organization's accessibility plan and any barriers faced by individuals interacting with the organization. This feedback will inform the City of Prince George 2023-2026 Accessibility Work Plan (AWP), which will be updated at least once every three years.

To meet these requirements, public feedback is continuously collected. For the purposes of this report, feedback was gathered from January 18th to September 9th, 2024, through the following methods:

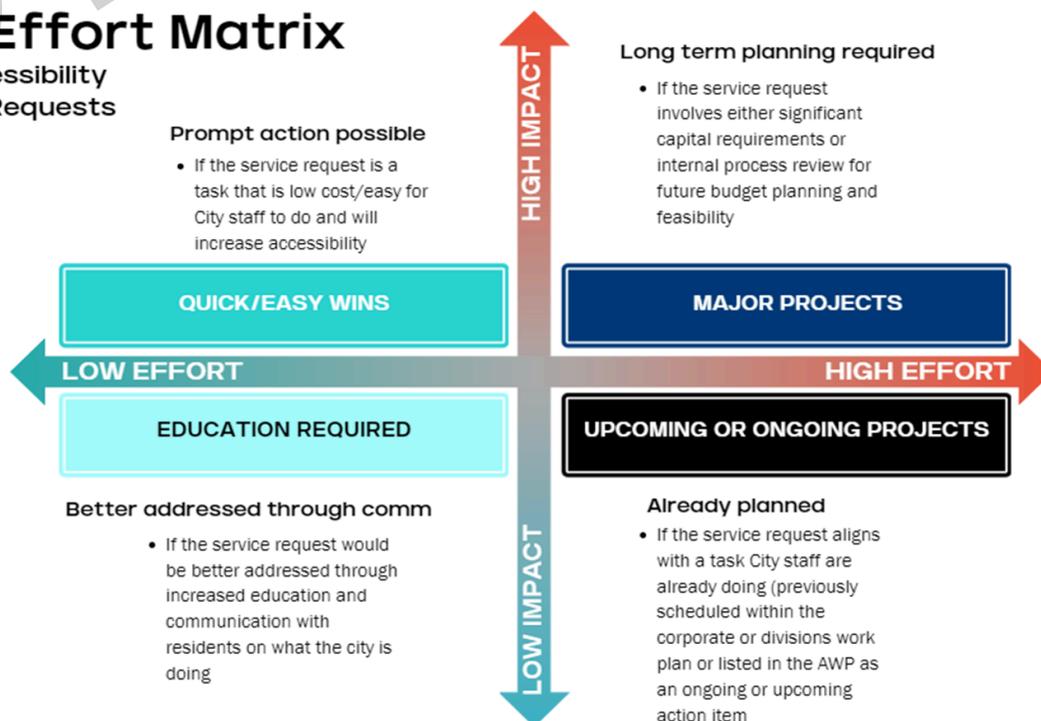
- In person at the Service Centre, City Hall (1st Floor, 1100 Patricia Boulevard)
- Via email at 311@princegeorge.ca
- By phone at 311 or 250-561-7600

Public feedback is managed as service requests through Cityworks, the City's asset management system. Accessibility-related concerns are tracked through checkbox (checked after the request itself is made), while feedback on the plan itself is categorized separately. Anyone interacting with or within the City of Prince George can submit a service request related to an accessibility issue. Each request is then automatically assigned to the appropriate division for follow-up, ensuring a streamlined and action-oriented response.

Service requests were synthesized and compiled into an Excel spreadsheet. To improve internal efficiencies, an internal working group meets regularly to review these requests and provide status updates, using an impact/effort matrix (see below) to categorize and prioritize concerns. The Accessibility and Inclusion Committee then analyzes the data and offers feedback to the relevant divisions, who attend meetings to listen to the feedback and address any questions.

Impact/Effort Matrix

To prioritize Accessibility Related Service Requests



Roads & Sidewalks: 32 service requests

Types of issues reported

Sidewalks:

- Many service requests highlight missing sidewalks, rough or damaged sidewalks, and obstructions like utility poles that impede movement.

Pedestrian crossings:

- Requests for crosswalks, improvements to visibility at intersections, and safer pedestrian routes (especially for individuals with mobility aids).

Curb drops:

- Several service requests mention a lack of curb drops (specifically need for improvements at bus stops and intersections).

Obstructions:

- Issues such as raised sidewalks, boulders blocking pathways, and uneven surfaces are frequent (creating tripping hazards or force people to walk in traffic).

Parking:

- Complaints about accessible parking spaces being limited or inaccessible, especially for individuals using wheelchairs.

Trend locations

- Ahbau Street (5 Service Requests)
- 15th Avenue Frontage Road (2 Service Requests)
- Winnipeg Street (2 Service Requests)

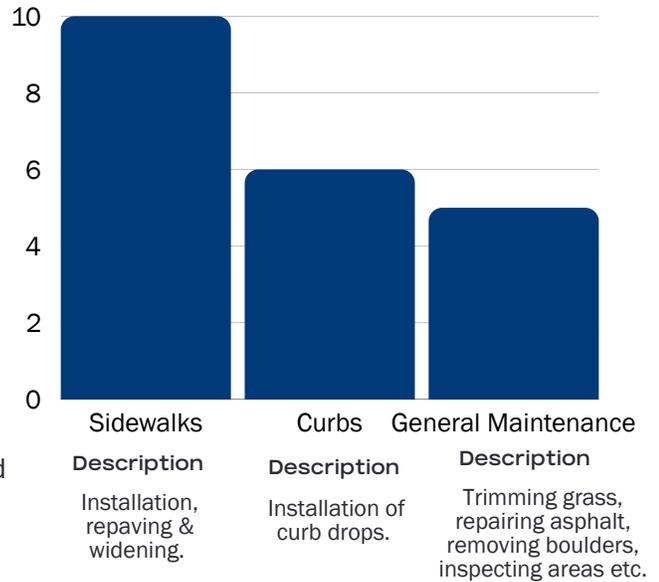
Highlight action

- To improve accessibility, three curb drops were installed in 2024 on Upland Street (near Ferry Avenue). Additional curb drops were also installed at the intersection of Connaught Drive and Juniper Street, addressing areas flagged through service requests included in this report.
- In 2024, initiated design work at Winnipeg street to address lack of connectivity with construction to be completed in 2025.
- In 2024, 35 curb drops were installed in various locations throughout the City.

Challenges

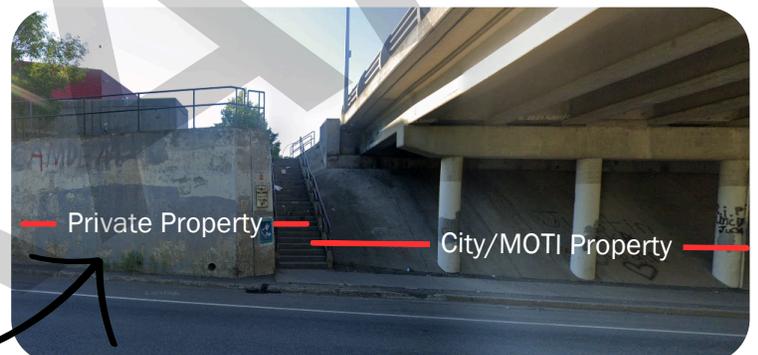
- Many of the requested improvements, particularly the installation of sidewalks and crosswalks, require long-term planning and alignment with other city infrastructure projects. This includes addressing utility poles, stormwater systems, and potential full road reconstruction.
- Several requests will likely take years to address due to the limited available funding for city-wide improvements.
- Some locations are not actually City jurisdiction and the City has no control over how that site is managed. For example, roads, sidewalks, or pathways located within private developments (e.g., malls, business complexes, or residential communities) are the responsibility of property owners.

Top requests



Did you know?

- In some locations, the layout and maintenance of roads are influenced by geography and logistics. For example, a sidewalk may not be present on both sides of a road if one side is needed for temporary snow storage during winter, especially in areas with heavy snowfall where space for snow clearing and storage is limited.
- Some utility poles are a BC Hydro asset and may cost about \$150,000 or more to relocate.

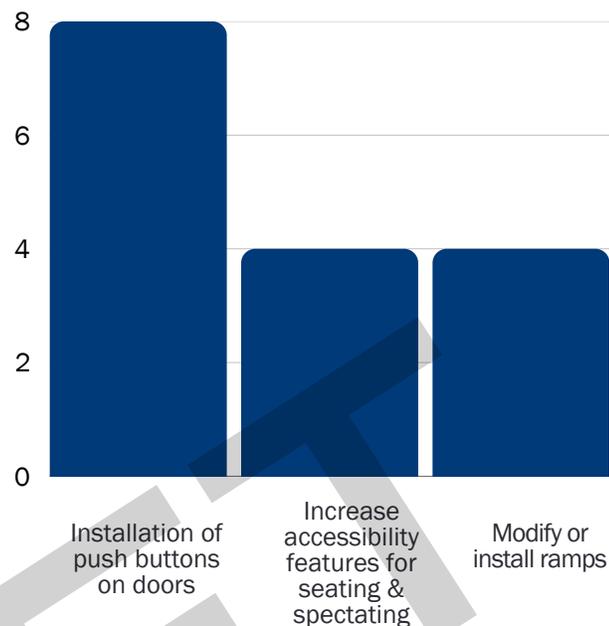


Civic Facilities: 19 service requests

Types of issues reported:

- Mobility access problems:
 - Ramps: Too short or steep, limiting wheelchair accessibility (e.g., Agriplex, Kopar Memorial Arena).
 - Lack of wheelchair landings or sufficient space (e.g., bleacher areas).
 - Broken or missing equipment like a chair lift (e.g., Aquatic Centre).
- Push buttons and doors:
 - Missing push buttons at entrances and washrooms (e.g., Agriplex)
- Accessible parking:
 - Misuse of accessible parking by individuals without handicap placards.
 - Inconvenient location of accessible parking stalls (e.g., City Hall).
- Event accessibility:
 - Designated wheelchair-accessible areas too small, discouraging attendance (e.g., CN Centre ticketed events).
 - Lack of seating for individuals with disabilities to sit with family (e.g., CN Centre).
- General facility accessibility:
 - Public facilities not meeting accessibility standards for individuals with disabilities.
 - Specific barriers in bathroom layouts & general design (e.g., Agriplex).
- Snow clearing and seasonal issues:
 - Need for better snow clearing around facilities (e.g., Kopar Memorial Arena).

Top requests



Trend locations

- Agriplex (11 Service Requests)
- CN Centre (3 Service Requests)
- Kopar Memorial Arena (3 Service Requests)

Highlight action

- Extra accessible parking spaces and better signage have been added at City Hall for easier navigation.
- A new chair lift will be purchased for the Aquatic Centre in 2025.
- A portable stage lift has been bought specifically for the Civic Centre to help people in wheelchairs access the stage.
- Rick Hansen Foundation accessibility assessments and subsequent improvements have been completed at City Hall and the Two Rivers Art Gallery.
- A grant application is planned for 2025 to support updated accessibility assessments of civic facilities (a project prioritized by the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion).

Did you know?

- The CN Centre was constructed in 1994, and at that time, accessibility design standards were not as stringent or comprehensive as they are today.
- We know that Accessibility can be more than built environment- Individuals with hearing disabilities can tune into 105.1 for Cougar games, for those using assistive listening devices, allowing them to hear announcements and music more clearly.

Challenges

- Many of the requested accessibility improvements are limited by the current design and structural constraints of the building. While we are committed to enhancing accessibility, some changes may not be feasible due to the building's existing layout and structural limitations.

Parks & Trails: 4 service requests

Types of issues reported:

- Trail accessibility: Inadequate connection between trails and sidewalks, hindering accessibility.
- Barrier-free access: Calls to remove obstacles on heritage trails to ensure wheelchair access.
- Vandalism: Graffiti on public restroom facilities, requiring maintenance and cleanup.
- Facility shortages: Lack of essential amenities, such as public washrooms at sports courts.

Locations

- McGill Park
- Carrie Jane Gray Park
- Duchess Park
- Jumpstart Mutli Sport Court

Challenges

- Our City Parks division must balance various community needs, and providing accessible trails or washrooms may compete with other projects, such as road maintenance or new development initiatives.

Highlight action

- There is a current capital project underway to renovate the building adjacent to the Jumpstart court, which will then be open as a public washroom. The project is scheduled for completion by summer 2025.
- City staff work to remove graffiti on our parks and trails on an ongoing basis.

Transportation (bus route): 1 service requests

Type of Issue reported:

- Public transportation expansion, specifically aimed at increasing transit options for elderly residents.

Location

- East (Blackburn area)

Challenges

- Expanding public transportation routes requires funding for new infrastructure, additional buses, and operational costs.

Highlight action

- Transit [Future Action Plan](#) identifies expanding transit network to service new areas, as new developments occur new routes can be introduced.
- BC Transit is reviewing an on-demand transit system, this option may be explored for rural areas like this.
- A project transit training for older adults and youth is underway for 2025.

Roads and Snow clearing: 4 service requests

Type of issue reported:

- Need for better snow clearing around facilities, particularly around accessible parking locations and paths to pedestrian crossings and bus stops.
- Clear (shovel) and maintain bus stops to ensure there are no icy slopes.

Locations

- Wood Innovation Building
- Downtown
- 15th Avenue
- Ahbau Street

Challenges

Prince George has 735 km of roads and 200 km of sidewalks to keep clear. Routes are planned according to a priority system.

- [Check your street's priority on our snow removal clearing map](#)

Did you know?

In addition to clearing routes, our normal winter operations include:

- Gravel road grading
- Vegetation control (slashing, grubbing, chipping overgrown road right-of-ways)
- Pothole maintenance
- Normal snow and ice control
- Snow windrow road widening, ditch maintenance, and exposing drainage catch basins in curb and gutter areas to accommodate melt cycles
- Off-loading of cul-de-sacs and areas prone to flooding
- Expose/off-load curb and gutter areas within the Bowl to expedite winter sand pick-up

C1 Zone (Downtown) Biohazards: 2 service requests

Type of issue reported:

- Biohazards (human waste) preventing access to areas downtown

Locations

- 1191 1st Avenue
- 1440 2nd Avenue (2nd Avenue Parkade)

Challenges

- Responding to biohazard cleanup involves both reactive measures (cleaning up after incidents) and proactive approaches (improving services and infrastructure). Key considerations include funding for new infrastructure or retrofitting existing facilities, along with ongoing maintenance costs such as security, cleaning, and related expenses.

Did you know?

- The City currently has a service agreement with Downtown Prince George BIA to provide daily biohazard removal (e.g., vomit, feces, urine, blood, and needles) from private properties and sidewalks in the C1 Zone.
- The City currently contracts ACME for cleaning and maintenance for parkades, lots, and areas around certain Civic facilities, including tasks like garbage removal, biohazard cleanup, and cleaning stairwells, lobbies, and washrooms.

Policy: 2 service requests

Issue reported:

- Request to implement a City policy offering free parking for individuals with disabilities.

Location

- Downtown

Challenges

- To ensure accessible parking spaces are used appropriately, the City would need to allocate resources for maintenance, enforcement, signage, and monitoring if it were to implement free accessible parking.

Did you know?

The City's fees and charges bylaw outlines the fees associated with downtown parking but does not currently include specific accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Not City Jurisdiction: 3 service requests

Issues reported:

- Maintenance hole hazard: Sinking manhole on Nicholson Street poses a tripping risk for wheelchair users (BC Hydro).
- Trail safety: Heritage Trail underpass between Carrie Jane and Strathcona safety issue due to flooding and ice buildup (MOTI).
- Crosswalk visibility: Faded crosswalk paint at 6th and Victoria Street creating a hazard for visually impaired pedestrians (MOTI).

Did you know?

The Federal government is responsible for major national infrastructure, like border roads and parts of the Trans-Canada Highway. The Provincial governments maintain highways and roads connecting cities, towns, and regional facilities. Municipal governments manage local streets, sidewalks, and infrastructure within cities and towns, including maintenance and road safety.

Highlight action

- City staff have informed the appropriate parties about the issues and provided them with the necessary details for further action.

Summary

This year marked the first time the City integrated public feedback into its processes and formalized a mechanism to address accessibility-related service requests. This initiative included the establishment of an internal working group and oversight by the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusion. Most service requests were submitted during the spring and focused on roads and sidewalks, including requests for new sidewalk installations, repaving, widening, and adding curb cuts at various locations across the City.

Key challenges in managing feedback

1. Limited integration of the app:

- We were unable to incorporate the City of PG app into our feedback process (software limitation). As a result, residents relied on emailing 311@princegeorge.ca, phoning 311, or visiting the service center in person. Staff would then create service requests manually using Cityworks and flag it as accessibility related once created.

2. Potential incomplete categorization of some accessibility requests:

- Accessibility-related requests may not have been flagged correctly if the caller did not explicitly identify them as such. These requests are still sent to the relevant division but may not have been reviewed by the internal working group or committee. This gap likely affected the inclusion of some requests for this report.

3. Complex and varied nature of requests:

- The diversity of requests made it challenging to organize and synthesize the requests for review, as people share information in different ways, making it challenging to streamline and standardize the data while maintaining the original intent and meaning.

4. Feedback timing and resident frustration:

- Service requests often spiked following social media posts encouraging residents to submit feedback. However, some residents expressed frustration with the official channels, emphasizing the need for the City to demonstrate responsiveness and action rather than ask for continued feedback on likely the same issues.

5. Limited ability to action

- Some requests were not city jurisdiction or posed significant capital expenditures. City staff have also reported difficulties in keeping up with the volume of incoming requests while ensuring meaningful and timely action. While ongoing accessibility requests highlight key areas for improvement, there is often uncertainty about how best to address certain complex or resource-intensive issues that may require council approval. City staff are currently operating at capacity to address accessibility concerns. Any additional accessibility-related requests should be evaluated with consideration for the need for additional resources.

Path forward

To make Prince George more accessible, it's crucial to hear from as many voices as possible on accessibility concerns in the community. We need specific information, including the location and nature of the request. Collecting more comprehensive data will enable better strategic planning and integration into the City's work plans where feasible. While the new feedback mechanism represents a significant step forward, it is evident that we still have gaps in our process. Addressing these gaps will enhance our ability to identify and resolve accessibility issues. Moving forward, we aim to refine our internal processes, strengthen communication with residents, and ensure accessibility issues are addressed.