



2026

Accessibility Progress Report



Figure 1 Motor Coach

Smith Transportation Ltd.

6/1/2026

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Smith Transportation is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, the traditional territories of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. We respect and commit to deeply considering their history, culture, stewardship, and voice.

General

Executive Summary

Smith Transportation Ltd., doing business as Vancouver Island Coach Lines & School Bus Company (hereon 'VICL'), is committed to building a culture of inclusivity and accessibility. Not only is this part of our company culture, but opening access to all is imperative to our continued growth and competitiveness in the transportation sector. We will contribute to a barrier-free Canada for everyone by building an accessibility framework that will support employees and the public we serve to have the best experience possible without services, products, and facilities.

Our efforts to achieve accessibility are deeply connected to and mutually reinforced by:

VICL's priorities include ongoing work in support of equity, diversity, and inclusion legislation, such as the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Labour Code*, and the *Employment Equity Act*.

We recognize that accessibility is an ongoing and central element of being an inclusive organization. That is why the plan we have developed to continue improving our accessibility builds on our inclusive mindset and practices.

Through the development of the initial Accessibility Plan published in 2024 and first Progress Report published in 2025, we identified barriers and actions to improve accessibility in the priority areas under the *Accessible Canada Act*.

This publication is the second Progress Report, it outlines the progress made in the last year and how feedback and additional consultation have and will continue to shape the initiatives and priorities of VICL.

Your Input and Feedback

VICL welcomes feedback on our Accessibility Plan and Progress Report from the public, clients, employees, and our stakeholders. This feedback is valuable to us, as it helps breakdown accessibility barriers, and build on our commitment to accessibility and inclusion. If you have any inquiries or feedback, please use one of the contact methods below. We will respond to all feedback in a timely manner. If you require support while providing feedback, please let us know, and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

Email: HR@gowilsonsgroup.com

Mail: 1925 Blanshard St, Victoria, BC V8T 4J2

Phone: 778-405-0231

An alternative format of this Accessibility Plan or Progress Report can be requested through any of the provided methods.

Public Communication Channels

VICL participates in multiple forms of formal and informal communications, including websites, social media, face-to-face, phone, chat (website and social media), surveys, and newsletters. In all forms of communication, we strive to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and can provide alternative formats upon request.

For a full list of public communications channels, see [Appendix A](#).

The Accessibility Team

The accessibility leadership team is comprised of managers and executives who play a key role in communicating to employees and the public regarding accessibility. This team is responsible for the oversight of accessibility in all aspects of the business, while ensuring the execution of the Accessibility Plan and the prevention of new barriers when possible.

Chelsea Crowther, Operations Manager (receives/distributes feedback and primary accessibility contact)

Travis Wilson, Chief Operating Officer

Our Accessibility Statement

At VICL, we are committed to making our organization and the services we provide accessible to all, including persons with accessibility challenges. All individuals have the right to benefit from our services equally, and those who work with us have the right to perform their duties free of barriers.

Acknowledgements

We want to thank everyone who participated in our consultations and provided feedback. Without learning about those lived experiences, we would not be able to reach our goal of being barrier-free by 2040.

Reporting Our Plan and Progress Reports

As required by the *Accessible Canada Act*, we will publish a status report annually that measures our progress against our commitments. We will also review and update our Accessibility Plan every three years.



Figure 2: Passengers smiling and looking out window of a coach.

Addressing Areas Identified in the Accessibility Canada Act (ACA)

Employment

VICL provides Charter Services for groups, private functions, scheduled, and school bus services. Being a family-owned and operated company, our employees are what make VICL thrive, therefore, we must ensure accessibility is present at every stage of employment. This means accommodation must be available upon request as reasonably possible, with accessibility in mind when creating new policies, processes, and practices as necessary.

This year brought about change with changes to the economy and shift in travel preferences. The VICL management team has created many shifts in both workplace location and services to ensure long-term success for the company and stakeholders.

Our Desired Outcome:

- VICL attracts qualified candidates with disabilities according to their availability on the labour market for our occupations.
- Ensure that employees with disabilities feel respected and treated equally to all other employees.
- Ensure employees and job seekers are aware of accommodation and face minimal barriers during the employee lifecycle with no stigma or trepidation present when asking for accommodation.
- Provide employees with regular training to support awareness of and responsiveness to the evolving accessibility needs of passengers and members of the public.

What We Have Achieved This Year:

- The implementation of new dispatching and point-of-sale (POS) software in spring/summer 2024 increased communication options for drivers and dispatch staff. The new system created a more inclusive work environment by allowing employees greater choice in how they receive dispatch communications. The software also reduced training barriers for employees entering dispatch roles by improving usability and streamlining operational processes.
- Following changes within the management team, there was an increased organizational focus on accessible staff training. Training was delivered using verbal instruction, written materials, and hands-on demonstrations to better accommodate different learning styles and information-processing needs.
- Staff training materials were updated using plain language, larger font sizes, and visual support, including pictures where appropriate, to improve accessibility and understanding for employees.
- The Operations Manager received accessibility training to strengthen awareness and understanding of barrier-free hiring practices, workplace inclusion, and the duty to accommodate employees and applicants with disabilities.
- The Operations Manager increased efforts to support open and accessible communication with employees by implementing regular communication through multiple formats,

including in-person discussions, telephone conversations, printed materials, and email communications related to workplace tasks, safety, and operational updates.

Next Steps:

- Increase employee and management training related to workplace psychological safety to help foster a respectful, inclusive, and supportive work environment.
- Continue monitoring hiring and recruitment practices to ensure barrier-free hiring and workplace accommodation processes remain in place and effective. With reduced recruitment activity in 2025, efforts will focus on maintaining the accessibility improvements and inclusive hiring practices identified in the initial Accessibility Plan and first Progress Report.

The Built Environment

The Built environment comprises human-made structures, features, and facilities, it is the physical environment where people live and work.

During this reporting period, the built environment of several locations operated by VICL changed. VICL no longer operates an office in Nanaimo BC, the company continues to maintain a yard and driver area at this location to support mid-Island operations. VICL also relocated all yards used for parking and dispatch operations in Langford BC.

As a transportation company primarily focused on charter and school bus services, public access to many of VICL’s operational facilities is limited. As a result, this section focuses primarily on the accessibility needs of employees, drivers, and other individuals who most frequently access these operational spaces.

While these operational changes have not altered the intended accessibility outcomes for the built environment, they have changed the approach and processes through which these outcomes will be achieved.

Our Desired Outcomes:

- Ensure all VICL buildings that we lease or operate from are easy for employees, visitors, and customers with disabilities or mobility issues to access.
- Provide a built environment where we can accommodate those with visible and invisible barriers.

What We Have Achieved This Year:

- Throughout the relocation process, steps were taken to ensure that walkways remained clear both inside and outside the facilities. Accessibility needs of current staff were also considered to help ensure that the location changes did not increase built environment accessibility barriers for current employees.

Next Steps:

- Conduct a built environment accessibility audit and gather feedback from employees and stakeholders who access VICL facilities to help identify accessibility barriers and prioritize accessibility improvements.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Information and communication technologies support many aspects of VICL's operations, including communication with employees, passengers, and clients. VICL recognizes that accessible technology can help reduce barriers, improve access to information, and support a more inclusive experience for everyone using our services.

During this reporting period, the Company continued improving digital tools, communication systems, and websites with a focus on accessibility, usability, and clearer communication.

Our Desired Outcomes:

- An increase in available self-serve technology and accessibility features enhances employee independence and participation.
- Ensure persons with accessibility barriers have access to using our technology, as reasonably possible.
- An increase in accessibility features for both employees and customers, including translation, visual aids, and more.

What We Have Achieved This Year:

- The implementation of new dispatching and point-of-sale (POS) software in spring/summer 2024, this increased ease of communication with the public, employees and long-term clients allowing increased real time communication and increased web-based communications (prior to the use of this software communication were heavily email and phone reliant).
- The [MT Washington Ski Bus website](#) was updated to improve colour contrasts for readability, and visual demonstration of stop locations were added.

Next Steps:

- Add language features to all websites making website content available in: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Basque, Belarusian, Bengali, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Catalan, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Corsican, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Esperanto, Estonian, Filipino, Finnish, French, Frisian, Galician, Georgian, German, Greek, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hawaiian, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Indonesian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Javanese, Kannada, Kazakh, Khmer, Korean, Kurdish (Kurmanji), Kyrgyz, Lao, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malay, Malayalam, Maltese, Maori, Marathi, Mongolian, Myanmar (Burmese), Nepali, Norwegian, Pashto,

Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Scottish Gaelic, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Sindhi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Somali, Spanish, Sudanese, Swahili, Swedish, Tajik, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Welsh, Xhosa, Yiddish, Yoruba, Zulu.

Communication, other than ICT

VICL recognizes that people receive and understand information in different ways and that accessible communication is an important part of creating an inclusive workplace and customer experience. This includes printed materials, signage, forms, schedules, and other non-digital communication used throughout operations and service delivery.

During this reporting period, the Company continued working to improve the clarity, readability, and accessibility of workplace and customer-facing materials while supporting access to alternative formats where reasonably possible.

Our Desired Outcomes:

- Ensure the accessibility of key documents, internally and externally, for people who request them in an alternative format.
- Respond to requests for key resources or publicly available documents in an accessible format in the same amount of time as for other document requests, or as directed by applicable legislation.

What We Have Achieved This Year:

- Ensure safety and employment related materials were reposted after the location move in accessible manner.
- Continued to work on updates to safe operating practices and safety programs to provide documentation that includes pictures, diagrams and plain language.

Next Steps:

- Continue updates to the company safety program and onsite signage to include more easily accessible information.
- Increase alternative formats available for internal and external documentation without the need for a special request.
- Catalogue and store documents and materials requested in alternative formats.

Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

The *Accessible Canada Act* requires us to consider accessibility requirements for procurement and include accessibility as part of the provision of goods, services, and facilities, where appropriate (e.g., accessible technology, materials, and amenities).

As a small company with operational changes that took place to the physical operating locations during this reporting period limited procurement activities took place this year.

Our Desired Outcome:

- Accessibility becomes a part of our procurement expectations, and the goods and services we purchase are accessible from the beginning.
- The procurement process allows us to reduce current barriers and prevent new barriers from forming.

What We Have Achieved:

- Procured parts and equipment necessary to maintain and enhance accessibility features across the fleet, supporting the continued delivery of safe, reliable, and accessible transportation services. This included but was not limited to maintaining lift equipped vehicles for charter and scheduled services.
- Introduced smaller cleaning and vehicle maintenance product containers to improve workplace accessibility and safety for employees who had trouble handling larger bottles and containers.

Next Steps:

- Continue using the Accessible Procurement Checklist to help ensure accessibility considerations are incorporated into purchasing decisions.
- Procure step stools for use on coaches, as drivers identified through the feedback process that these would improve their ability to safely assist passengers experiencing accessibility challenges.

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Accessibility is highly considered when designing and delivering VICL's internal and external programs & services.

[Vancouver Island Coach Lines](#) (charter service): VICL has a range of school buses and coaches used to provide charter services including a wheelchair lifts equipped vehicle.

[Mount Washington Ski Bus](#) (scheduled service): Offers convenient pick-up and drop-off at 11 locations across Southern Vancouver Island. Perfect for solo skiers, groups, or anyone who'd rather not drive.

Our Desired Outcome:

- Collaborate with staff, the public and other external stakeholders to identify and implement the delivery of programs and services that go beyond our legislated requirements, are beneficial, user-friendly, and increase productivity.

What We Have Achieved This Year:

- A member of the administrative team who is fluent in French is available to support passengers and members of the public as needed.
- Increased person to person support for customers through increased phone availability to employees located on Vancouver Island.

- Drivers received training to support the safe and respectful onboarding and disembarking of passengers with physical mobility disabilities, helping improve accessibility and customer service for passengers requiring mobility assistance.
- Staff training video created on the proper and safe use of a wheelchair lift.
- Increased customer service coaching and performance reviews provided to drivers.

Next Steps:

- Increase driver training focused on supporting passengers who experience accessibility challenges when using our services, with an emphasis on safe, respectful, and effective assistance.
- Collaborate with agencies to support persons with accessibility changes in gaining access to our services.
- Implement annual Customer Service Training to decrease barriers to accessing transportation services due to staff interactions.
- Provide refreshed training to drivers on how to use accessibility features on the vehicles they drive and how to support passengers with accessibility challenges.

Transportation

As a provider of charter, school bus, and scheduled transportation services across Vancouver Island BC, VICL recognizes the importance of accessible transportation in supporting independence, community participation, and access to essential services. Accessibility considerations remain an important part of service delivery, operational planning, and employee training.

During this reporting period, VICL continued reviewing transportation services, stop locations, and operational practices to help identify and reduce barriers for passengers experiencing accessibility challenges. The Company remains committed to improving accessibility through ongoing staff training, service evaluation, and collaboration with employees, passengers, and community stakeholders.

Our Desired Outcomes:

- Better understand gaps in transportation systems.
- Study barriers to affordable transportation and how they can impact equity groups in Canada.
- Ensure all coach operators are well-trained in lift equipped vehicle use.

What We Have Achieved This Year:

- Review of stops used by both charter and schedule service offerings to review accessibility needs of passengers.

Next Steps:

- Review the potential to increase service levels on Vancouver Island, following feedback indicating that expanded service in the Nanaimo and Campbell River areas would improve access to essential transportation services. Historically, limited government funding and ridership levels have made these routes financially challenging to sustain. However, considering changing economic conditions, including a shift toward increased domestic travel and more Canadians choosing to travel and vacation within Canada, VICL will re-examine the feasibility of expanding service in these regions.
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Culture

As a family-owned and operated business with deep roots in the communities where we live and work, VICL is committed to fostering a culture grounded in diversity, inclusion, and shared values. Community is one of our core principles, and we take pride in giving back to the communities we serve.

Desired Outcome:

- Fosters an inclusive, respectful, and barrier-free organizational culture where accessibility is embedded in everyday practices, decision-making, and interactions. With a workplace environment that supports open communication, psychological safety, and equitable participation, ensuring that all employees feel valued, supported, and able to perform their roles effectively regardless of disability or accessibility needs.
- Contribute positively to the broader community by supporting accessible community programs and charitable organizations.

What we Have Done this Year:

- Increased respectful, inclusive, and culturally sensitive communication within the workplace. This improvement is attributed to changes in Operational Manager, enhanced company-wide communication initiatives as outlined throughout this report, and increased training opportunities.
- Provided support to the Federation of Social Services of BC.

Next Steps:

- Implement a policy that allows employees to substitute a federally recognized statutory holiday with a religious or cultural day of personal significance. For example, an Australian employee who wishes to observe Anzac Day instead of Victoria Day could work on Victoria Day at their regular rate and receive statutory holiday pay on Anzac Day.
- Increase the internal and external celebration of cultural events.

Consultation

The Company recognizes that ongoing engagement with persons with disabilities, as well as organizations and stakeholders that support accessibility, is essential to reaching our goal of a barrier-free 2040. As part of this reporting period, the Company continued its consultation efforts to gather feedback on accessibility initiatives, identify ongoing barriers, and help inform future improvements.

The consultation process included the distribution of surveys to collect feedback on accessibility improvements implemented since the previous reporting period, as well as to identify any new or continuing barriers. To support accessibility and encourage participation, surveys were made available in multiple formats, including online, print, and telephone options. Feedback was sought from persons with disabilities, passengers, employees, members of the public, and other stakeholders.

In addition, the Company conducted informational interviews with organizations that support persons with disabilities, including the Rick Hansen Foundation, to obtain further insight on accessibility priorities, current best practices, and areas for continued improvement.

Consultation Results

- 30% of external stakeholders who participated in the consultation identified as someone with accessibility challenges, a decrease of 14% from the last reporting period.
- 18% of external stakeholders notice an improvement in accessibility in the past 12 months. This is a decrease from 25% during the previous reporting period this is likely due to decreased operations during this period.
- 23% of external stakeholders indicated they were aware of the accessibility features offered, this represents no change from the previous reporting period.
- 46% of external stakeholders indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied without existing accessibility features, and 46% indicated a neutral response, with only 7% indicating they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. This is a marked increase over the previous reporting period with only 18% indicating satisfaction.
- Of the 15 people employed by VICL, five participated in the consultation process, including one individual who identified as a person with accessibility challenges. The results indicate that, despite increased training efforts, employees are still not fully aware of all accessibility features currently available, and only one employee identified noticeable accessibility-related changes during this reporting period. No employees surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with the Company's overall accessibility features.
- Consultations with two individuals from the Rick Hansen Foundation provided valuable insights that supported many of the achievements completed to date and confirmed that planned next steps are aligned with accessibility and best practices. In addition, the individuals consulted provided positive feedback regarding the company's progress and ongoing commitment to accessibility.

The feedback and results gathered through the consultation process directly informed both this Progress Report and many of the achievements identified throughout each section of the report. For example, following employee feedback received during this reporting period, the Company has

already implemented the use of smaller containers for fluids and cleaning products to improve ease of handling and better support employee accessibility needs. Additionally, employee feedback related to the procurement of step stools has been addressed in the Procurement section of this report.

The Company recognizes that gaps and barriers remain and has incorporated actions to address these areas within the applicable “Next Steps” sections of this report as part of its ongoing commitment to improving accessibility. Examples of planned next steps include increased employee training, continued improvements to communication and awareness initiatives, and technology enhancements intended to further reduce barriers and improve accessibility for employees, passengers, and stakeholders.

Feedback

While the Company did not receive formal feedback through the processes outlined in the 2024 Accessibility Plan or the 2025 Progress Report, informal accessibility feedback was received through other communication channels during this reporting period.

Feedback received through the Company’s marketing and communication channels contributed to updates to the Company website, as outlined in the [Information and Communication Technologies](#) section of this report. In addition, updates to driver training materials and increased communication with drivers resulted from initiatives undertaken by the newly appointed Operations Manager, who engaged in open dialogue with drivers regarding their professional expertise and the experiences of passengers with accessibility challenges.

As a small operator serving fewer passengers than many larger federally regulated entities, the Company typically receives a lower volume of accessibility-related feedback. Despite this, the Company remains committed to promoting both formal feedback mechanisms and ongoing informal dialogue with employees, passengers, and stakeholders in the coming year to support the continued identification and removal of accessibility barriers.

Conclusion

VICL remains committed to building and maintaining a barrier-free organization where accessibility is embedded in our operations, services, and culture. Throughout this reporting period, progress has been made that supports a barrier-free Canada for everyone, this is supported by ongoing consultation, employee engagement, and continuous improvement initiatives. While the Company recognizes that gaps and barriers still exist, the actions identified in this report and in the associated “Next Steps” sections demonstrate a clear and structured approach to addressing them.

Moving forward, VICL will continue to strengthen accessibility through increased employee training, ongoing improvements to communication practices, and targeted technology enhancements. The Company will also continue to refine its feedback and consultation processes to ensure that the lived experiences of persons with accessibility challenges, employees, and stakeholders remain central to decision-making.

Through these efforts, VICL will continue working toward its long-term goal of a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable transportation environment for all..

Definitions

Accessibility – Refers to the needs of persons with disabilities being intentionally and thoughtfully considered when products, services, and facilities are built or modified so they can be used and enjoyed by persons of all abilities.

Barrier – The Accessible Canada Act defines a barrier as “anything – including anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy of a practice – that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

Disability – The Accessible Canada Act defines a disability as “any impairment including anything physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment, or a functional limitation, whether permanent, temporary, or episodic, or evident or not, that, interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.



Figure 3: City skyline and waterfront..

Even small changes can have huge impact

Appendix A

Websites:

<https://mtwskibus.com/>

<https://vicoachlines.com/>

<https://viconnector.com/>

<https://victoriacruiseservices.com/>

Instagram:

[@mtwashinton.ski.bus](#)

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/mtwskibus/>