



June 2020

Destination BC is committed to accessibility and inclusivity. We want to ensure that British Columbia is a welcoming destination for everyone. We are building capacity to support more inclusive and accessible tourism products, services, experiences, and employment opportunities in the industry.

Our initiatives to support people with disabilities, and increase accessibility and inclusion build off the foundational work we initiated in 2019. In June 2019, Destination BC launched *Toward an Inclusive and Accessible British Columbia Tourism Industry*—a three-year (2019-2021) strategic framework and action plan to build capacity within the industry, and champion meaningful tourism employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Current initiatives include:

- Improving trip planning information on [HelloBC.com](https://www.hellobc.com), showcasing current accessible tourism experiences through the development of mobility-focussed travel itineraries, and accessible content including imagery;
- Encouraging tourism businesses to add their accessible features to their business listings on [HelloBC.com](https://www.hellobc.com), helping travellers to plan their trip to British Columbia with confidence. As of June 2020, over 380 businesses have completed this work;
- Continuing to add new learning resources to our online [Learning Centre](#), to assist tourism businesses in building an understanding of accessible travel, and inspiring them to increase their accessible offerings. As of June 2020, there are 15 accessibility resources available;
- Establishing an Advisory Group to be co-chaired with the Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture;
- Continuing to celebrate and acknowledge innovations towards accessibility from the tourism industry through an annual award at the BC Tourism Industry Conference, as well as ongoing recognition through our online corporate platforms and channels; and
- Supporting the Provincial Government's Accessibility Secretariat on an ongoing basis.

Year one initiatives focused primarily on physical and sensory challenges – mobility, vision and hearing. Years two and three will include work on supporting cognitive and general inclusivity challenges.

People & Development

- Destination BC is an inclusive workplace, founded on the highest degree of collaboration and innovation. Destination BC believes that diversity is a strength and welcomes applications from all qualified job seekers. All recruitment advertising clearly states that Destination BC is an inclusive workplace. We are committed to ensuring workplace accommodations are in place to enable our people to do their best work.
- Destination BC has proudly participated in the [BC Public Service's Work Able Internship Program](#) since 2018. Through this program, Destination BC offers a twelve-month internship opportunity, to individuals who self-identify as having a disability, in a project-based role.
- Destination BC continues to deliver leadership development opportunities to all employees to build capacity, awareness and skill in practicing inclusive leadership.

- In January 2020, all Destination BC employees participated in a half-day workshop on the topic of unconscious bias and conscious inclusion. In this session, employees learned more about the business case of inclusive work cultures, and how our organization can continue to foster a culture that embraces and leverages diversity.
- In April and May 2020, all Destination BC employees attended a valuable series of learning workshops focused on the topic of mental health and illness in the workplace. The purpose of these learning sessions was to drive inclusive leadership capabilities across Destination BC, including courage, empathy and open communication.

In 2020, Destination BC will continue to uphold its commitment to accessible hiring through inclusive hiring practices, and providing employee learning and development opportunities on accessibility, and diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

- Destination BC's CEO (Marsha Walden) is a member of the [Presidents Group](#), a CEO task force led by the Honourable Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Services and Poverty Reduction, to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Destination BC's People and Development Team (human resources) is working with the Presidents Group to better identify ways to recruit people with disabilities.
- Destination BC's People and Development Manager is a member of the Presidents Group Community of Practice, comprised of 25-member organizations from across British Columbia. This Community of Practice launched in June 2019, with the goal of sharing, developing and applying best practices, and removing barriers in terms of inclusive employment practices.

Corporate Communications

- Destination BC continues to promote accessible hiring within the tourism industry, and to share information about the work of the President's Group, and accessible and inclusive tourism practices on its corporate social platforms ([Twitter](#) / [LinkedIn](#) / [YouTube](#)), its [corporate newsletter](#) and [website](#), and in presentations and speeches given by Destination BC staff.
- Destination BC's corporate website, [DestinationBC.ca](#), was developed with ADA (Americans with Disabilities) and WCAG 2.0 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliance as a requirement. This guided the User Experience (UX), design and development phases of the project. The obligation to be ADA compliant includes compliance with current, and generally recognized, guidelines for website accessibility (e.g. the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 and Levels A / AA) as well as any applicable website accessibility laws and regulations.
- Part of building an accessible website is to ensure that assistive technology tools, such as screen readers, can access the information on a web page. In order to accomplish this, Destination BC is using the W3C standards for accessibility as a guideline. This takes into consideration the website layout, mobile friendliness, fonts, colours, meta data, use of alt tags, use of 'predictive text' in search and filter fields, keyboard control of navigation and content, and simplified navigation to name a few.
- In a future phase of the website, Destination BC will introduce voice search.

Destination Development

- As part of Destination BC's strategic planning work on destination development, Spinal Cord Injury BC representatives have actively participated in meetings and consultations.
- Opportunities to enhance accessibility and inclusion have been identified in various destination development strategies, as they relate to:
 - Transportation (roadside amenities, transit providers, ferry);
 - Tourism workforce (hiring and advancement practices, physical work environment);

- Tourism experiences and attractions (both private and public-owned); and
- Tourism accommodation.

Market Development

Destination BC, through consultation with B.C.'s Regional Destination Marketing Organizations (RDMOs) and a number of private organizations, created six itineraries with accessible tourism experiences, as of June 2020.

The itineraries are promoted to tour operators and travel media in our overseas markets, as part of a suite of itineraries which include all regions of the province. Additional itineraries will be created in the future.

Consumer Marketing

- Information on accessible travel in British Columbia is available on [HelloBC.com](https://www.hellobc.com), including links and information on transportation, accommodation, things to do, and more, including:
 - A new [Accessibility](#) section;
 - Four new travel planning articles; and
 - Additional resources to assist people with disabilities with their trip planning.
- Tourism businesses can now add their accessible features to their business listings on [HelloBC.com](https://www.hellobc.com), helping travellers to plan their trip with confidence. As of June 2020, over 380 businesses have completed this work.
- Destination BC's consumer website, [HelloBC.com](https://www.hellobc.com), has been developed with ADA (Americans with Disabilities) and WCAG 2.0 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliance as a requirement. This guided the User Experience (UX), design and development phases of the project. The obligation to be ADA compliant includes compliance with current and generally recognized guidelines for website accessibility (e.g. the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 and Levels A / AA) as well as any applicable website accessibility laws and regulations.
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- Destination BC works closely with the Regional DMOs to identify and amplify accessible content that they, and others across the tourism network, have produced through our consumer marketing channels. Examples include:
 - [Sit-Skiing in Northern British Columbia](#), produced by Tourism Northern BC and published on Destination BC's YouTube channel;
 - [7 Ways to enjoy a weekend in Prince George](#) (featuring The Great West Life Mobility Trail), produced by Tourism Prince George and published on Destination BC's Instagram channel; and
 - New photography produced by the Kootenay Rockies Tourism Association added to the [BC Content Hub](#) (Destination BC's Digital Asset Management System), for access and use by tourism industry partners across the province.

Industry Learning Centre

- Launched in December 2018, the industry Learning Centre on Destination BC's corporate website, [DestinationBC.ca](https://www.destinationbc.ca), provides tools and resources for tourism businesses and organizations across a

variety of subject matters, from visitor experience to digital marketing. Video content on this site is captioned to support accessibility.

- As of June 2020, 15 new accessibility resources have been added to our new [Accessible Tourism](#), section of the [Learning Centre](#), to assist tourism businesses in building an understanding of accessible travel and inspiring them to increase their accessible offerings.
- The site also features [go2HR's 'Service For All'](#), an online training program designed to support front-line staff in serving customers with various needs, including persons with disabilities.

Visitor Services Network Program

- Destination BC has encouraged its Network of 130 locally-run Visitor Centres to make their premises accessible. Currently, 95% of the Visitor Centres in the Network Program are wheelchair accessible.
- Destination BC provides funding for Visitor Centre staff and volunteers to take [go2HR's 'Service For All'](#) online training program.
- All Visitor Centres have added their accessible attributes to their business listings on [HelloBC.com](#).
- Representatives from Spinal Cord Injury BC presented at the 2020 Visitor Services Conference on the benefits of increasing the level of accessibility at the Visitor Centres across British Columbia.
- Destination BC encourages communities to be creative and forward thinking about providing visitor services to visitors via mobile kiosks, roaming ambassadors, state-of-the-art touch screen kiosks and via social media, making valuable information more accessible to all visitors, when and where they want it.

Regional Destination Marketing Organizations (RDMOs)

In 2019-2020, all five RDMOs, and the Vancouver Coast & Mountains Region managed by Destination BC, worked on various initiatives to support the development and promotion of accessible travel and tourism products and services in their regions. For example:

- Kootenay Rockies Tourism collaborated with Spinal Cord Injury BC to host interactive Universal Design workshops free of charge;
- Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association hired a Regional Accessibility Specialist, in partnership with Spinal Cord Injury BC. More information can be found at <https://www.totabc.org/accessibility>; and
- The Vancouver, Coast & Mountains region, shared accessibility guidelines and standards with all businesses that were registered in the Tourism Resiliency Program and ensured the program website was developed to current accessibility standards.