

THE

Whistler Village Access Audit

*A Review Of The Whistler Town Site
For Barriers To People With Disabilities*

CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT - NOT FOR RELEASE

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For the Village of Whistler, people with disabilities represent an untapped market ready, willing and able to become key contributors to the long term success of the resort and supporting services and facilities.

INTRODUCTION

This survey was completed as an integral part of the 2010 Bid Process. Yet its content is equally applicable to the Municipality of Whistler even without a successful Olympic bid. Good access is important for much more than just the anticipated Olympic Games. There are well in excess of 245,000 people with disabilities already living in the Lower Mainland and across North America, 55 million people report having a significant disability. In addition, our population is aging rapidly. For the first time in history there are more seniors than teenagers in Canada while the U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that 80% of the vacationing traveling public are over the age of 55 – statistically referred to as 'older adults'. With age comes reduced agility, mobility and sensory capabilities. In short, the fastest growing segment of our society is the community of people with disabilities. For the Village of Whistler, people with disabilities represent an untapped market ready, willing and able to become key contributors to the long term success of the resort as well as its supporting services and facilities.

Access for people with disabilities and seniors affects virtually every aspect of the planning and operation of a destination resort on the scale of Whistler. Access for people with disabilities is a philosophy, not just an addendum on a blueprint. Tremendous opportunities are created when accessibility is integrated throughout the entire planning process. The building code alone cannot do that. The full participation of people with disabilities requires a commitment from town planners to create an integrated and welcoming environment for all.

Whistler is more than a skier's paradise. It is a family destination that offers real opportunities to families that include a person with a disability. Proactive, long term disability planning can bring impressive economic benefits to organizations making a commitment to accessibility.

With regards to the 2010 bid, the greater participation of the world's largest minority group could be among the most meaningful legacy opportunities that the event could generate.

Introduction (continued)

This report assumes that individuals on site will have a level of physical ability that permits independent movement outdoors under normal conditions. The recommendations here do not reflect the needs of individuals with severe disabilities seeking independent access.

The recommendations of this report are offered from the perspective of people with disabilities, in the interest of creating a safe, welcoming environment. Recommendations appear in the order of priority within each area, as established by the author. Town managers and Olympic officials will need to establish their own priorities as a whole to determine which improvements may be made and when. Recommendations have been prioritized into four levels:

- Priority 1 – safety and/or liability issues
- Priority 2 – upgrades required to meet current building code requirements
- Priority 3 – changes based on community preference
- Priority 4 -- important but less time sensitive improvements

This report was researched in **February 2003** over four consecutive days. Access assessments were made of connecting pathways, stairs, ramps and facilities that, if not provided by the Municipality, then were perceived to be the responsibility of the Municipality. Some privately owned facilities were reviewed if they were deemed critical to people with disabilities – such as indoor parking. However, individual buildings were not a part of the scope of this report - only the safe and dignified access for people with disabilities to the various areas of the Village was reviewed. Independent, site specific access assessments of popular buildings/locations should be conducted on a timely basis in anticipation of the potential Olympic/Paralympic Games and in preparation for the changing demographics of our population.

It should be noted that the recommendations made in this report are made from the perspective of improving access for people with disabilities. Recommendations made here have not been reviewed for conflicts with other code requirements or the priorities of the Municipality of Whistler. This report is intended to be a tool to assist management to develop a long term plan for upgrading the facilities in order to meet the needs of the community of people with disabilities.

Finally, this report uses some global terms of reference to describe groups affected by different barriers found on site. It needs to be recognized that no two people with a disability, even identically diagnosed ones, are the same. Within each group there is a broad range of abilities. Still, the report attempts to identify groups of individuals that, in the opinion of the author, would likely have difficulties with a particular barrier or obstacle existing on campus. There will however always be exceptions to the rule.

Comments regarding the contents of this report should be directed to:

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What Is Disability?

Disability is described by Statistics Canada as "the loss or reduction of functional ability and activity that is consequent upon impairment." One in seven Canadians or 20% of the population reports having a disability. There are more than fifty-five million persons in North America and approximately 500,000 people living in British Columbia with permanent disabilities – more than half of these living in the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

People with temporary disabilities are no less formidable to provide facilities and services for than are permanent disabilities. In fact, people with temporary disabilities rarely have the same skill level as people with permanent disabilities when it comes to using either walking aids or other assistive devices. It is worth noting that temporary mobility impairments are a common occurrence at Whistler.

The other main groups that benefit from a barrier free approach are:

- Older Adults & Seniors -- Mobility, dexterity, vision and hearing are all affected more as we age.
- People with Young Children -- Parents with strollers and toddlers often have difficulty maneuvering in poorly designed facilities.

It should be kept in mind that barrier free design is not just for people with disabilities. It is a better design approach for all users.

B.C. Building Code Standards

Unless otherwise stated, the code standards quoted in this document will reflect the requirements of the B.C. Building Code (BCBC). Where comments or recommendations address non-code issues or promote a 'beyond code' approach, CSA/CAN-B651-M90 minimums and community preference will be described.

Language

To assist staff to properly discuss the issues presented in this report, the following terms and language parameters may be helpful.

<i>Do Not Use or Say</i>	<i>Do Use or Say</i>
<i>Aged (The)</i> <i>elderly (the)</i>	Seniors or Older Adults
<i>Blind (The)</i> <i>visually impaired (the)</i>	<u>Person</u> who is blind/ <u>Person</u> who is visually impaired. Only when referring to the entire blind population is “The blind” acceptable.
<i>Confined to wheelchair</i> <i>wheelchair bound</i>	Person who uses a wheelchair/Wheelchair user
<i>Cripple</i> <i>crippled</i> <i>lame</i>	Person with a disability Person with a mobility impairment Person who has arthritis, etc.
<i>Deaf (The)</i>	Person who is Deaf Only when referring to the entire Deaf population and their culture is “The Deaf” acceptable.
<i>Hard of Hearing (The)</i>	Person who is hard of hearing Note: These individuals are not Deaf and may compensate for a hearing loss with hearing aids or other technical aid.
<i>Epileptic (The)</i>	Person who has epilepsy
<i>Fit</i> <i>attack/spell</i>	Seizure
<i>Handicapped (The)</i>	Person with a disability, unless referring to an environmental or attitudinal barrier. In such instances “...a person who is handicapped by...” is appropriate.

Do Not Use or Say

Insane
lunatic
maniac
mental patient
psycho
nuts
mad

Invalid

Mentally Retarded
retarded
mongoloid
simple
idiot
feeble minded

Normal**Patient**

Physically Challenged
differently able

Spastic

Suffers from...
afflicted by
stricken with

Victim of cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc...

Do Use or Say

People with a mental illness, person who has schizophrenia, person who has depression, etc.

The term 'insane' should only be used in strictly legal sense.

Person with a disability. In the literal sense, 'invalid' means 'not valid'.

Person with an intellectual disability, person with cognitive difficulty.

One should say 'a person with Down's Syndrome' only if specifically relevant to the story.

Person who is not disabled. The word 'normal' should only be used in reference to statistics, for example "good dexterity is the norm in this age group."

Person with a disability, a client of the hospital, a consumer of medical services.

People with disabilities
 Trendy definitions are just tiresome

Person who has spasms. 'Spastic' should never be used as a noun.

Person with disability, person who has cerebral palsy, etc. Having a disability is not synonymous with suffering.

Person who has cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, mobility impairment, etc.

Parking - Existing Conditions

Designated Parking for People with Disabilities

Generally, the designated spaces provide the required parking for people with disabilities; including some spaces wide enough for lift equipped vans. However, oversize spaces should be signed as "Van Accessible" to encourage appropriate use. A greater concern is the lack of an appropriate curb ramp near each of these designated parking spaces. Without an appropriate curb ramp, people with mobility impairments are forced out into the roadway to exit the parking area. People using walking aids are unable to quickly get out of the way of traffic and wheelchair users travel in the seated position and so are difficult to see as vehicles – particularly SUV's, back out of parking spaces. A safe route along the shortest distance possible is an important safety consideration for people with mobility impairments using parking facilities.

Pay Parking

There are designated parking spaces for people with disabilities located throughout the village. Both on-street parking and spaces in lots are available. Some of these are located in pay parking areas. The ticket vending machines currently in place are not accessible to most people with disabilities. The parking ticket dispensing machine requires good dexterity to operate and most are located off the pathways and/or on uneven ground (1). Consideration should be given to adopting a policy of not requiring vehicles displaying a valid SPARC permit to purchase parking tickets. Further, over height vehicles should also be exempt from time limits because:

- A. It takes longer for most people with mobility impairments to accomplish the same tasks as some others, and
- B. There is no other appropriate parking since the day lots are not accessible and over height vans cannot access underground parking. As much as ½ of spinal cord injured people with vehicles operate over height, lift equipped vans.

Day Parking Lots – 1 through 8

Lots 1 – 8 are all gravel lots which winter weather has scarred and worn, leaving deep potholes and uneven surfaces (2)(3). These areas present a significant falling hazard for people using walking aids as well as for people with mobility impairments and would be difficult for most wheelchair users to navigate. This is not appropriate parking for most older adults, seniors and other people with mobility impairments.



(1)



(2)



(3)

Marketplace Parking

There are a total of 271 spaces in this parking lot (taken from municipal drawings), three spaces are designated for people with disabilities. This meets minimum BCBC requirements (4). The two spaces on the south side are located well away from sidewalk access ramps forcing users out into the roadway and all the way to the west side of the lot (at Marketplace Lodge) to exit. This route requires people least able to travel long distances to travel the furthest - in this case, traveling downhill, only to go back up 2 ramps to access the sidewalk. In addition, the curb ramp access to the sidewalk ramp located at the Market Place Lodge has been located inside a 15 minute parking zone (5). A vehicle using this space would block the curb ramp preventing anyone needing a curb ramp from exiting or entering the parking lot. The other ramp access on the east side of this lot near unit 129 (leading to Main Street) was excessively steep when it was first constructed. Now however, the slope is even greater because of land settling.

The single designated parking on the north side of the Marketplace at the Professional Building is large enough to accommodate a lift equipped van and has an adjacent curb ramp (6). This curb ramp has neither high contrast nor tactile surfaces. As a result it is almost invisible to people with visual impairments.

Main Street Parking

There are two designated spaces on Main Street in areas designated as pay parking. Both of these are located in front of the Alpenglow - near the Marketplace (7). Access to the ticket dispenser would be difficult for most people with mobility impairments because of the lack of curb ramps as well as machine design and mounting heights.

Library Parking

There is one designated space large enough for lift equipped vans.

Municipal Hall Parking

There is one, standard sized designated parking space.

Gateway Loop/Village Drive Parking

There is one, standard sized designated parking space.

Conference Centre Outdoor Parking

There are two designated spaces here, one large enough for a lift equipped van. These are located in a pay parking area where the dispenser is inaccessible to wheelchair users and other people with mobility impairments. There is no marked crossing to safely route users out of the parking area and across the busy adjacent roadway.



(4)



(5)



(6)



(7)

Parking (continued)

Sundial Crescent Parking

There is one, on street designated parking space here. The adjacent sidewalk does not offer direct access to the Village Stroll. Users must travel in the roadway to Village Lane to exit this area.

Upper Village Parking

There are two designated spaces in this lot. No lines indicate precise spaces and there is no pavement signage. Vertical signs are in place. Users must travel in the roadway to exit this area.

Creekside Parking

There is one parking lot which is similar to the day parking located near the Village. This parking has similar obstacles and barriers as described above for lots 1 through 8 and is not appropriate for most people with mobility impairments. There is also underground parking available here where there are two designated spaces, both with vertical signage but not marked pavement. There is easy elevator access to these spaces. Note: This is free parking. This lot will not accommodate over height vans but will handle cars and mini-vans.

Whistler Centre Short Term Parking

This is an outdoor short term parking lot near 'The Puppy Zone' with 32 spaces. None are designated parking for people with disabilities. At least three spaces should be designated in this lot, especially because this lot connects directly to the Village Stroll.

Village Underground Parking

The underground lots are pay parking (except Royal Bank). The ticket machines in all these facilities require good dexterity to operate. Even for people with disabilities able to operate the machine the process is onerous because most could not access the machine from inside their vehicles at the entry.

Pan Pacific Lodge – the four designated spaces are marked with vertical signs but not pavement markings. Access to the accessible parking area is through four levered handled doors with heavy automatic door closers. For people using walking aids, wheelchair users and others, doors can be a significant obstacle. This lot will not accommodate over height vans but will handle cars and mini-vans.

Royal Bank – there are no designated spaces for people with disabilities as required by BCBC.

The Town Plaza – there is one designated space for public use. It has vertical signage, but not pavement markings.

Whistler Town Centre – has two designated spaces per floor x three floors. Signage is the international symbol painted on an adjacent pillar but no pavement signage. Access to the designated parking is via an elevator and through another door equipped with a conventional, round door knob and a heavy automatic door closer. This would be difficult for most people with reduced hand function, people using walking aids and many wheelchair users to open. Note: the positioning of the 'star' symbol on the elevator panel does not meet BCBC requirements since its placement indicates the lobby level, not a ground level exit.

Coast Whistler – there is one designated space for public use. It has vertical signage, but not pavement markings. The lot is shared between public and hotel parking. It is difficult to determine one from the other.

Connecting Pathways and Sidewalks

General

The town site utilizes rolled curbs throughout the village and its roadways in place of conventional 'step' curbs. Although perhaps easier for people using strollers, rolled curbs should not be mistaken as accessible to wheelchair users and people with mobility impairments. They do not replace the need for proper curb ramps in any application. Further, while the concrete portion of the installation holds its position, over time the brick pavers or gravel base adjacent to these rolled curbs have been allowed to sink or erode away from the concrete (8). This creates a tripping hazard along the exposed edge of concrete. A fall here could be even more dangerous because of vehicle traffic. This is a hazard for all users but in particular for wheelchair users and people using walking aids. This problem is compounded by the large quantity of loose gravel used to combat ice and snow. Ironically, the loose gravel itself becomes the tripping hazard in the absence of snow and ice. For people using canes or crutches – a common result from sports injuries, it is particularly hazardous. Further, this approach to ramping pedestrian routes does not provide a consistent tactile surface change or high contrast markings to assist people who are blind or have vision impairments. As a result, these individuals may not be aware that they have crossed over into traffic zones.

Marketplace Pathways

The access ramp from the parking lot to the Marketplace Lodge and adjacent shopping is a concrete ramp built to the maximum slope allowable. It has two contrasting handrails which make it easier to use for many people. However, the settling of the brick pavers has created a significant lip at the base of the ramp (9)(10). In addition to being a tripping hazard, this 2 -3 inch edge makes going up the ramp unnecessarily difficult for wheelchair users. For wheelchair users coming down, it creates a highly unstable transfer from ramp to sidewalk. The handrail supports at the base of the ramp are poorly located and are an unnecessary obstacle.

The stairs adjacent to this ramp offer three significant problems for users. First, these steps are equipped with only one handrail. People requiring a handrail on the opposite side would be at risk on these steps. Second, there is no tactile warning at the top of the stairs or high contrast nosings on each step as required by the current BCBC. Third, the settling of the pavers means that the base of the steps slopes away from the stairs, rather than provide a flat landing surface (11). This creates a high falling hazard for people using walking aids, visual impairments and people wearing ski boots.



(8)



(9)



(10)



(11)

Marketplace Pathways (continued)

The south side shopping area (units 110 – 129) is served by three ramps connecting this area to the Marketplace Lodge/Liquor Store area. The first is equipped with three freestanding handrails (12). The placement of these handrails unnecessarily narrows this pathway. The middle ramp has handrails attached to the walls on both sides. The final ramp has only one handrail (on the parking lot side) making it more difficult for older adults and people with mobility impairments.

Seven sets of stairs provide access to this area from the parking lot. Each of these sets of stairs has significant problems that could result in falling hazards. From the Marketplace Lodge side, the first set of stairs is a semi-circle design that provides three handrails. The outside handrails are blocked by landscaping that has been allowed to grow over the rails, rendering them useless (13). These stairs have no tactile warning at the top of the stairs or high contrast nosings on each step, as required by the current BCBC.

The next set of stairs has an extensive erosion problem resulting in broken pavers and uneven ground at the base of the steps. In addition, the ground settling has caused the sidewalk to slope away from the base of the steps creating a falling hazard for all users (14).

The two sets of steps in the centre of the south side retail area have no tactile warning at the top of the stairs or high contrast nosings on each step, as required by the current BCBC.

The main pathway stairs leading to/from the Village Stroll has 6 handrails and have no tactile warning at the top of the stairs or high contrast nosings on each step, as required by the current BCBC. Even more dangerous to people with visual impairments and many others are the unprotected drop offs on either side of these stairs (15). People with visual impairments in search of the outside handrails as well as people using walking aids and wheelchair users are all at risk along these long unprotected edges – particularly at night .

The last two sets of stairs along this route have no tactile warning at the top of the stairs or high contrast nosings on each step, as required by the current BCBC. The last set also shows a serious settling of the pavers at the base causing the ground to slope away from the stairs, rather than provide a flat landing.

Ramp access at this end of the retail area (near Main St) is too steep for access by most wheelchair users.



(12)



(13)



(14)



(15)

Marketplace Pathways (continued)

In addition to the six sets of concrete stairs, there are two wooden stairs adjacent to the loading zone. These steps have worn wooden nosings, no handrails and unprotected drop offs (16). Neither of these sets of stairs meets current BCBC requirements and both represent a falling hazard to most people with disabilities.

Bench seating provided in this area does not provide a back rest or arm rests (17). Older adults rely on both these features – the back rest for comfort, the arm rest to assist them rise to their feet by pushing off. Without a back rest, users losing their balance risk falling into an unprotected drop off.

In front of the IGA there is both stairs and a wheelchair ramp. There is a mid block curb ramp serving this ramp however accessing this ramp requires users to travel in the roadway.

The IGA stairs have no tactile warning at the top or high contrast nosings on each step, as required by the current BCBC. The handrails do not meet current BCBC requirements for extension at the base and a settling of the pavers at portions of the stairs base causes the ground to slope away from the stairs, rather than provide a flat landing (18).

At the north end of the Marketplace, the Professional Building is a raised area requiring users to climb four steps or use an elevator to access the businesses here. Settlings of the brick pavers has created a difficult pathway for people with mobility impairments and people using walking aids. The route to the elevator is narrow and the ground surface uneven (19).

The elevator fails to offer many much needed access features for people with disabilities. The floor is a dark colour making it hard to determine if the elevator car is actually present when the doors open. A light colour floor assists people with visual impairments to ensure that the car is there, not just an abyss. Also, the floor sill should be marked in a high contrast colour – preferably signal yellow – to highlight any height differences should the elevator fail to level properly. The handrail does not provide a graspable surface and would be of little use for most users. Finally, the star symbol has been placed beside the 'M' level indicator. The star symbol indicates a ground level exit to people who are blind and would be properly located beside the 'G' level control.



(16)



(17)



(18)



(19)

Access to the Marketplace/Northlands Blvd.

Pedestrian access from the Village Stroll and from Main Street is fairly direct – although people unable to use stairs must be able to negotiate the steep ramp on the Main Street side or the three inch lip via the Marketplace Lodge ramp.

Access from Northlands Blvd is more difficult. There are sidewalks on both sides of the street that are accessed only by rolled curbs. This affords access to power wheelchair users and sport manual wheelchair users. However, the lack of proper curb ramps – especially when combined with the loose gravel covering most surfaces limits access for most people with mobility impairments. For people with visual impairments the challenge is the changing sidewalk access. Some are high rolled curbs, others are shallow rolled curbs. Some are flush transitions that are completely unmarked with tactile or high contrast edging. Inconsistencies like these are most difficult for most people with visual impairments or those who are blind.

There are three pedestrian crossings linking the residential areas located to the east of the Marketplace, Main Street and points beyond. Each of these is a raised crosswalk which presented an opportunity to minimize the grade difference for wheelchair users and people with mobility impairments between the sidewalk and the roadway. Unfortunately the raised portion was feathered out before the curb edge, which instead compounded the problem by creating a dip at the curb edge.

Heading north on Northlands, the first crossing has no curb ramps or even rolled curbs on either side (20). This route is not accessible to people with mobility impairments. The painted lines marking this crosswalk have faded and are difficult for drivers to see.

The second is located at the south end of Main Street and offers rolled curbs on both side (21). Again, the painted lines marking this crosswalk have faded and are difficult to see.

The third is located at the south end of Main Street and offers rolled curbs on the east side and unmarked curb ramps on the west side (22). This affords some access to power wheelchair users and some manual wheelchair users. Here too, the painted lines marking this crosswalk have faded and are difficult to see.



(20)



(21)



(22)

Access to the Marketplace/Northlands Blvd (continued)

Northlands Entrance

The only sidewalk route to the Marketplace other than the Village Stroll is from the Northlands entrance. The south side of the driveway provides a continuous sidewalk linking to the Marketplace pathways. The north side entrance does not. There is a marked crossing connecting the Professional Building to the south sidewalk but it does not have an appropriate ramp or curb ramp (23). There is no direct access to the Professional Building for wheelchair users or others requiring ramped access.



(23)



(24)



(25)



(26)

Access to the Marketplace/Lorimer Road

There are sidewalks on both sides of Lorimer Road that are accessed only by rolled curbs. This affords access to power wheelchair users and sport manual wheelchair users. However, the lack of proper curb ramps – especially when combined with the loose gravel covering most surfaces limits access for most people with mobility impairments. For people with visual impairments the challenge is the changing sidewalk access. Some are high rolled curbs, others are shallow rolled curbs. Some are flush transitions that are completely unmarked with tactile or high contrast edging. Inconsistencies like these are difficult for most people with visual impairments or those who are blind.

Lorimer Road Entrance

There is no sidewalk entrance from Lorimer into the Marketplace (24)(25). There is a stair entrance off the north side bus stop for people able to climb the 20 steps. Others either must enter the roadway or travel back to the south side of the Northlands entrance. The lack of proper sidewalks has not deterred able bodied pedestrians from cutting across the landscaping at the driveway - demonstrating the need for sidewalk access (26).

Village Stroll

The Village Stroll offers good basic access for people with mobility impairments along its length through the Village, although portions of the route suffers from the same settling and uneven surface created by sinking brick pavers. This is particularly problematic at the north end, behind the Marketplace. The pathway here has significant sinking resulting in some areas being impassable for wheelchair users and hazardous for people using walking aids. Also in this area there are trees planted in the pathway. Generally this is not a good idea because it creates obstacles in the path that are hazards to people with visual impairments. Increasing the contrast of the tree grate would assist pedestrian in identifying these obstacles. Specifically, some of the trees have been allowed to keep their lower branches (27). These branches stick out at odd angles and are at eye level for many pedestrians.

Throughout the entire length of the Village Stroll there is only one step marked in a high contrast colour (28). Highlighting steps in this way makes them visible to many people with visual impairments as well as emphasizing the level change to other users. This type of preventative measure is fundamental to creating a safe environment for seniors and people with visual impairments. All steps connecting the retail and restaurant areas with the Village Stroll should have high contrast, non slip nosings.

The grand staircase connecting the Village Stroll to Blackcomb Way has appropriate handrails but not high contrast nosings. As a result the steps are difficult to delineate from each other making descending unnecessarily difficult for people with visual impairments and many other users (29). The lighting on these steps is uneven and casts broad, irregular shadows. As a result they are difficult for all users at night, but particularly for people with vision impairments. Similarly, the staircases just to the south at the Village Inn and the Keg Restaurant do not provide high contrast nosings as required (30). Neither of these staircases offers a continuous handrail. This makes use of these stairs both difficult and hazardous for people with mobility impairments and people with visual impairments. There is no wheelchair access to the Village Stroll from these areas.



(27)



(28)



(29)



(30)

The only wheelchair access to the restaurants and shops located in the 'The Fitzsimmons' is located on the most southern point of the building (31). The pedestrian route is narrowed by the swing path of doors, restaurant seating and display space. As a result, this area is largely inaccessible for practical purposes.



(31)

On the other side of the Village Square, in front of the Blackcomb Lodge, there are two steps that do not have high contrast nosings (32). As a result, they would be difficult to see by people with visual impairments especially because of the low rise design and especially at night. Next to the Lodge there are long lengths of unprotected drop offs in front of high traffic areas including the liquor store, the grocery store and the drug store (33). These edges represent an extreme hazard to all users – particularly people using walking aids, wheelchair users and people with visual impairments. People using this area after dark are particularly at risk.



(32)

Further, the stairs in this area do not provide high contrast nosings or appropriate handrails as required by BCBC. The lack of high contrast nosings makes it very difficult to delineate each individual step. Ineffective handrails increase the risk beyond acceptable levels.



(33)

Handrails on the stairs at the drug store entrance do not provide a graspable surface. There are no handrails at all on the steep steps near the liquor store. People with visual impairments searching for handrails here are at risk of falling into the unprotected drop offs on either side of the stairs. Other stairs in this area offer an obscure handrail arrangement cutting diagonally across the steps but offering no assistance at the sides of the stairs where most users would expect handrails (34). None of the handrails in this area meet the requirements of the current BCBC.



(34)

The pathway continues east past the Conference Centre toward Whistler Way via a steep ramp of brick pavers. This ramp is too steep for independent access by most wheelchair users.

Main Street Pathways

As with other routes and sidewalks in the Village, Main Street utilizes rolled curbs to connect the various sections. These do not provide a flush transition between surfaces and would be difficult for most wheelchair users and people with mobility impairments.

Most of the facilities and services on this street are difficult to access for people unable to use stairs. For example, the Tyndall Stone Lodge and the retail outlets within can only be reached by wheelchair users from the Village Stroll side of the building (35). Similarly, there is only one ramp serving the block long Summit Lodge and its store fronts. Access for the cafes and retail located in the Alpenglow is located at the side of the driveway forcing users out into the roadway. Including the slope up to the ramp, it is too long and steep to meet current code. Both of the designated parking spaces for people with disabilities serving Main Street are located near here (36).

Upper Village Pathways

The pedestrian route from Day Parking Lots 1 – 4 leading to the Upper Village travels through an underpass which leads to a set of stairs with five flights up to the Blackcomb Day Lodge. The stairs do not have the required non slip nosings or tactile warnings at the top (37).

The handrails serving these stairs are not continuous, not located in appropriate places nor do they have a graspable surface. They would be of little use as handrails to most users.

The sides of the staircase are rough rock edges jutting into the path of travel. People with visual impairments attempting to navigate this route by 'shorelining' – traveling along one edge of the path – would be in significant danger of falling or at the very least becoming seriously disoriented (38).

The Day Lodge and the assorted restaurants and shops are only accessible from the north end by people unable to use stairs. Some of the stairs here are deteriorating and could become tripping hazards for all users (39).

None of the concrete steps have high contrast, non-slip nosings or tactile warnings at the top of the stairs as required.



(35)



(36)



(37)



(38)



(39)

Upper Village Pathways (continued)

Along the Upper Village Stroll there are at least three sets of stairs built into the grade. The result is a series of edges created where the stairs first emerge from the sloping path (40). These steps are concrete and blend into the surrounding surfaces rendering them almost invisible to all pedestrians – and even more so for people with visual impairments. It is essential that these steps are marked in a high contrast colour, particularly at the beginning of the slope where the step edges become tripping hazards.



(40)

The stairs leading up to the retail area of Le Chamois are unmarked and have a complete section leading directly into a stone wall (41). The main section of steps has only a centre handrail with insufficient colour contrast to meet requirements. On the top landing of the steps, there is a stone support pillar blocking almost 1/3rd of the stairs (42). This would be very difficult for most people with visual impairments to see in order to avoid a collision.



(41)

This stair design is full of misinformation for people who have low vision or who are blind and they should never have been allowed to be built.

In the centre of the Upper Village Stroll there is a sewer grate with its slots in line with the normal path of travel. This could be dangerous for some wheelchair users and people using walking aids. Grates should be placed at right angles to the main pedestrian traffic flow or a grate with smaller openings be installed.



(42)

The crosswalk linking the Upper Village with Day Parking is a raised style which could have been very useful for wheelchair users and other people with mobility impairments. However, instead of extending the raised portion to meet the rolled curbs on either side, they stopped short, leaving a gap between surfaces (43). This creates a difficult 'down, then up' movement on the wheelchair and therefore increases the tripping/falling hazard at this intersection as well as making it unnecessarily difficult for wheelchair users.



(43)

2010 Office/Presentation Centre

This is a portable building that has had a deck added to it. The deck has a wood surface with either 1 or 2 steps up depending on which side is being approached. These steps would be difficult to see by most people with visual impairments because they have no high contrast nosings or tactile warnings as required by the BCBC (44). Further, the wood surface becomes extremely slippery in wet, frosty or snow conditions resulting in a falling hazard on many days.

At the time of the survey, wheelchair access was blocked by snow piled up on the ramp (45). This snow appeared to have been shoveled off the deck. This is clearly a barrier to all ramp users.

Interior and exterior bulletin boards are located unnecessarily high for use by wheelchair users and others.

The office does not offer TTY (TDD) service for people who are deaf and seeking information about the bid.



(44)



(45)

The Municipal Buildings

Wheelchairs access to The Town Hall is via a steep wooden ramp added onto the back door of the building. There is no flat landing at the base of this ramp as required by current codes. There are two sets of handrails – one set high mounted, the other mounted low for the benefit of some wheelchair users. The swing out door at the top of the ramp does not provide an appropriate handle for use by people with reduced dexterity and/or hand function.

Stairs serving the both the front and the side entrance do not provide high contrast nosings, tactile warnings or high contrast handrails as required.

There are only two designated parking spaces suitable for regular vehicles serving all of the municipal functions in this cluster. Current code requires three designated parking spaces in a lot this size. Designating a space at the front entrance adjacent to the existing painted pavement would provide the required parking space width without realigning other spaces.

The RCMP station opposite The Town Hall has a code compliant wheelchair access ramp complete with power door opener. The stairs to the station entrance do not provide high contrast nosings, or tactile warnings as required.

Village Stroll Public Washrooms

There are public washrooms located all along the Village Stroll and in other areas. Although designated as 'men's' and 'women's' rooms, these are designed as single occupant facilities. They share a number of common obstacles to people with disabilities beginning with the lack of an emergency alarm. Washrooms are the most common place for a fall to occur. It is even more problematic for wheelchair users doing toilet transfers in unfamiliar surroundings. The difficulty is that if a fall occurs in a single occupant washroom it is likely that the door is locked. Since there is no other traffic using the facility getting help becomes a problem.

Other common issues include:

- The washrooms are equipped with very heavy automatic door closers which makes it difficult for wheelchair users and people using walking aids.
- The toilet paper dispensers are not within easy reach for people with reduced range of motion, balance or hand function – particularly wheelchair users and older adults (46).
- There is no back rest or toilet seat lid as required by current BCBC (46).
- The flush handle is located on the wrong side and creates a fall hazard for most wheelchair users – BCBC (46).
- There is a coat hook mounted on the door but it is too high for use by most wheelchair users. Further, door mounted coat hooks can be dangerous to people walking past the open door (47).
- There is no tactile signage on the washroom doors and what signage was available varies from facility to facility (48).
- There is little or no directional signage leading people to the facilities.
- The paper towel dispenser is mounted too high for easy use by people with mobility, balance or range of motion impairments. Although some washrooms were equipped with lever operated units, most of these dispensers require good dexterity to operate (49).

Conference Centre Washrooms

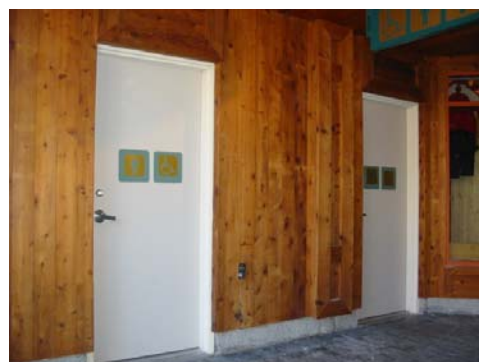
These facilities are down a flight of stairs and therefore not accessible to people with mobility impairments. They were not surveyed in detail due to the Conference Centre construction.



(46)



(47)



(48)



(49)

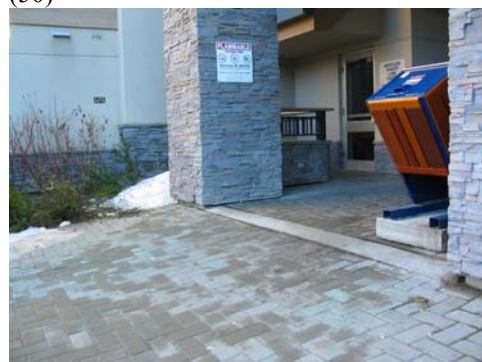
The Medical Centre

There is no connecting sidewalk the links the front entrance to Lorimer Road (50). For people not driving, there is no approach that does not require users to travel in the roadway.



(50)

The front entrance is accessed by a ramped surface of brick pavers on an excessive slope. At the top of this ramp is a rolled curb (51). This entrance should not be considered accessible to people with mobility impairments and wheelchair users. Further, at the base of this ramp there is an unprotected garden plot immediately adjacent to the ramp entrance (52). Wheelchair users having control difficulties going down this slope could end up in this garden rather easily.



(51)

There is one designated parking space for people with disabilities. It will accommodate standard vehicles but not lift equipped vans. At the time of the survey, a large concrete abutment was blocking all use of this space (53).



(52)



(53)

Public Transportation

Bus Service – Rolling Stock

Discussions with transit officials revealed that currently half of the buses in service are accessible, i.e. lowered floor buses. It is anticipated that by 2010, all transit vehicles will be accessible.

Bus Service – Stops and Shelters

There are two problems found with the bus shelters. Most have a full length bench inside which blocks wheelchair users from entering the shelter (54). The second barrier was found at all shelters except two in Creekside. There are exposed concrete lips at the entrance and broken uneven ground in front of the shelters (55). It appears that this is the result of erosion. This renders the shelters inaccessible for wheelchair users and many people using walking aids. The large shelter on Village Gate Blvd is not accessible to wheelchair users and most people using walking aids because of the two high steps at the entrance.

The bus stops are of course located on roadways throughout the area. As discussed earlier, rolled curbs, inaccessible crosswalks and other barriers found in the connecting routes limit access to the bus service.

Gondola Transit Exchange

There is ramped access to this exchange from the adjoining sidewalks. Access from Village Stroll is via a grand staircase leading from Mountain Square. These stairs are a poor design for most users, particularly people wearing ski boots, people with mobility impairments and people with visual impairments. The handrails here do not meet BCBC requirements because there is no continuous handrail (57). In practical terms the three flights of stairs have randomly placed handrails. Some begin after the first flight, stop and then restart again on the bottom flight (56). The stairs are wider at the bottom than at the top. Snow has been allowed to encroach on the lower levels creating a significant tripping hazard. There are stone columns at the top of the stairs with no apparent use. Because they are the same colour as the sidewalk and stairs they would be difficult for people with visual impairments to identify. The stairs have neither high contrast nor tactile markings.

The stairs on the Mountain Square side has a significant unprotected drop off along the sidewalk edge. Users following the direction given by the handrail would be guided directly into this drop off. On the bus loop side the asphalt at the base of the steps creates a tripping hazard (56). To add to the frustration of these stairs is the reality that for the most part they are unnecessary. There are stairs on both sides meaning that users must climb up one side, only to go down the other.



(54)



(55)



(56)



(57)

Taxi Service

There is no accessible taxi service in the Whistler area. All of the 4 taxi companies operate through the same dispatch service. In discussions with the office staff it was revealed that the cab companies did not feel that accessible service was warranted because "this is a skiers place. Wheelchair people don't come here."

This in spite of an 800% growth, the Whistler Adaptive Ski Program (402 lessons last year – up from 42). The perception that skiing is an able bodied sport is not only incorrect but is also in conflict with the reality that coming to Whistler allows families with someone with a disability to share a family vacation.

Further, no TTY (TDD) service is available for people who are deaf.

In a location that does not offer accessible bus or handi-Dart service, accessible taxi service is critically important. Just as they had to be overcome in Vancouver, the attitude of the taxi firms will have to improve to accommodate the Paralympics and to move Whistler forward. Minimum access levels should be a licensing requirement.

Intersections

Intersections play a critical role in establishing access for people with disabilities. Without a safe transition route from area to area, particularly in light of the lack of taxis, handiDart or accessible bus service, people with disabilities are held captive in small areas awaiting help to travel even across the street. Therefore it is important to develop good access across all intersections to ensure a safe and free flowing environment.

Controlled Intersections

Village Gate Blvd & Northlands Blvd

This is probably the single busiest intersection in the village. There are visual crossing signals that are activated by small push button controls mounted on lamp posts. These buttons require good dexterity to operate. There are no audible crossing signals.

No proper curb ramps have been installed and as a result there are no tactile strips available to assist people with visual impairments. Unlike many other sidewalk routes, the rolled curbs on each the four corners have been flattened enough to provide a smoother transition to the roadway. There are marked pedestrian crossings – although they require new paint (58)(59).

Hwy 99 & London Lane/Lake Placid Road

This intersection connects commercial and residential areas with the Creekside Gondola. The area was under construction at the time of the survey however this intersection appears to have been built without any consideration for people with disabilities. There are visual crossing signals that are activated by large push button controls mounted on lamp posts – however they are well off of the pathway on a downhill slope (60). There are no audible crossing signals.

The crossings on both sides link to an asphalt island via a cut out in the asphalt. The lip at the bottom of this ramp makes this ramp difficult for wheelchair users (61). This 'curb ramp' would be completely invisible to people with visual impairments. Further, the islands do not offer a connecting route for people with mobility impairments to exit the island without sending them out into opposing traffic. Once in the roadway, there is no link to the sidewalks and pathways on the west side. As it stands, this is not an accessible route.



(58)



(59)



(60)



(61)

Intersections (continued)

Pedestrian Crossing across Blackcomb Way

This route links the day parking lots, the Upper Village, the trails and the picnic areas with the village and the Gondola Transit Loop (Village Gate Blvd). On the north side crossing, the crossing signal is operated by a small button requiring good dexterity to push. It is equipped with a high contrast sign however there is no tactile information. The south side control is a large, easy push button however it is located off the path and lacks any signage (62).

A curb ramp was attempted for both these crossings although they are too narrow to be effective for all users. The drop at the curb edge creates a 'gutter' effect making it unnecessarily difficult to cross for wheelchair users and people using walking aids (63).

Blackcomb Way & Lorimer Road

No proper curb ramps have been installed and as a result there are no tactile strips available to assist people with visual impairments. Unlike many other sidewalk routes, some of the rolled curbs on the corners have been flattened enough to provide a smoother transition to the roadway. Still, these are not suitable transitions (64). There are marked pedestrian crossings on all sides of this intersection.

There are visual crossing signals that are activated by small push button controls mounted on posts. These buttons require good dexterity to operate. The button on the north-east corner is mounted unnecessarily high but is a good example of extending the sidewalk surface to provide access to the operating switch (65). The high contrast signage for this operating button is helpful to people with visual impairments, however there are no audible crossing signals.



(62)



(63)



(64)



(65)

Uncontrolled Intersections

Blackcomb Way & Lorimer Road

No proper curb ramps have been installed and as a result there are no tactile strips available to assist people with visual impairments (66) and use by wheelchair users and other would be unnecessarily difficult. There are no marked pedestrian crossings at this intersection.



(66)

Blackcomb Way & Village Gate

No proper curb ramps have been installed and as a result there are no tactile strips available to assist people with visual impairments. Unlike many other sidewalk routes, the rolled curbs on each the west side have been flattened to provide a smoother transition. There are marked pedestrian crossings – although they require new paint (67). There is no access for people with mobility impairments to the day parking areas from this intersection.



(67)

Also located here is a ramped approach to the Village Stroll (68). Although quite steep at the onset, for those able to use it (with help or independently) it could dramatically reduce the distance to travel than other routes to the Stroll. Unfortunately the route is blocked for wheelchair users by a curb (69). This curb is also a significant tripping hazard to other users – particularly people with mobility impairments.



(68)

Lorimer road & Northlands Blvd.

No proper curb ramps have been installed and as a result there are no tactile strips available to assist people with visual impairments. Unlike many other sidewalk routes, the rolled curbs on each the four corners have been flattened enough to provide a smoother transition to the roadway. There are marked pedestrian crossings.



(69)

Recommendations

General

The Village provides basic access for wheelchair users and people using walking aids through a series of ramps and connecting sidewalks. Locating these access features without first traveling in the wrong direction however can be a challenge.

- Develop a directional signage program that indicates accessible routes to key features/areas of the Village and indicates approximate distances and grades (if in excess of 8%). As a part of this program, identify ramps/routes with a common symbol. Note: this identifying marker could incorporate the international symbol for accessibility but should be distinctly different to avoid confusion with other accessible features. A simple blue strip may be sufficient.

There are no public/pay telephones equipped with TTY (TDD) devices for people who are deaf anywhere in the Village. This is a serious shortcoming of the basic access for people with disabilities being provided. Telus will provide the equipment required upon request, based on availability.

- Install a TTY (TDD) keyboard on one telephone in each cluster of pay telephones located throughout the Village.
- Install signage indicating the presence of a TTY (TDD) utilizing the international symbol at all locations.

There are a usually high number of dogs present in the Village. To combat the problems related to ensuring that owners clean up after their animals, plastic bag dispensers and signage are located throughout the Village. To further promote this cause, and to assist people with disabilities using certified service dogs, consideration should be given to installing proper 'dog relief areas' in strategic locations. These could be located adjacent to parking lots or other close but discrete locations.

- Develop a series of dog relief stations to serve to Village. Most importantly, one at either end of the Village Stroll is recommended. This would require:
 - An area of at least 10 x 10 of natural grass with good drainage/absorption abilities.
 - Level access to the adjacent sidewalk.
 - A fence or hedge surrounding the area for privacy – not for the dogs but to minimize exposure to visitors.
 - A bench for owners to sit on.
 - A garbage can with a secure lid.
 - A supply of plastic bags and some kind of box or container for them – such as the ones already available on the Stroll.
 - Directional signage leading to the area.
 - Staff to periodically replenish the bag supply and possibly to clean up the area – there may be a few service dog users that will be unable to pick up after the dogs.

It is highly recommended that key staff and contractors that are involved in the areas identified in this report receive appropriate disability awareness training to sensitize them to the issues of people with disabilities.

- Provide disability awareness training that incorporates both disability simulations and seminar training. The course should be at least one full day in length and respect national standards for access over personal preferences.

Parking - Recommendations

General

- Develop an accessible curb ramp to the specifications established by the City of Vancouver for curb ramps adjacent to each designated parking space for people with disabilities. Note: the vehicle using the designated space must not block the curb ramp from use – I.E. do not locate the new curb ramp within the space. If this is not possible, develop a marked pedestrian route to the nearest appropriate curb ramp.
- Expand signage programs to designate existing 'Van Accessible' spaces throughout the village.
- All designated parking for people with disabilities should have both vertical signage and pavement markings.

Pay Parking (including underground facilities)

- Relocate or upgrade surfaces to ensure people with mobility impairments can access pay machines.
- Mount all machines at a maximum operating height of 1200mm from the ground.
- Develop a policy of non-enforcement on parking fees / time limits for vehicles displaying valid SPARC placard.
- Undergo discussions to replace the existing ticket dispenser with one requiring less dexterity to operate.

Day Parking Lots 1 – 8

- Grade and fill existing lots to improve surface for walking.
- Develop a portion of each of these lots to accommodate at least 1% (as per BCBC) of the available parking as appropriate for people with disabilities displaying a valid SPARC placard. This should include a firm, well lit and level surface in close proximity to an accessible pathway connecting to an accessible connecting route.

Marketplace Parking

- Reconfigure the landscaping in front of units 120-129 to provide an appropriate curb ramp/direct accessible route to the sidewalk from the designated parking.
- Develop an appropriate curb ramp serving the Professional Building's designated parking including flush transitions and tactile warnings (see General above).
- Remove and replace the access ramp near unit 129 with a new surface and BCBC compliant design.

Main Street Parking

- Develop an appropriate curb ramp serving each of the designated parking spots in this area including flush transitions and tactile warnings (see General above).

Municipal Building Parking

- Add one designated parking space to this lot located at the main entrance and adjacent to the pavement markings out front.
- Clearly mark the spaces on the pavement and add the handicap symbol to each of these 2 parking spaces.

Parking Recommendations (continued)

Conference Centre Outdoor Parking

- Develop a marked pedestrian crossing linking the designated parking with the Village Stroll and Conference Centre Entrance.

Upper Village Parking

- Develop a marked pedestrian crossing linking the designated parking with the Upper Village Stroll.
- Clearly mark the spaces on the pavement and add the handicap symbol to each of these 2 parking spaces.

Creekside Parking

- See 'Day Lots' above.

Whistler Centre Short Term Parking

Designate three parking spaces as parking for people with disabilities. At least one of these should be made accessible to lift equipped vans (4.7m wide). Apply vertical and pavement signage.

Underground Parking

Pan Pacific

- Replace automatic door closers with low resistance delayed action closers to reduce resistance to door swing.
- Evaluate whether all 4 of the access doors are necessary to secure the building and meet fire code requirements.
- Clearly mark the pavement with the handicap symbol to each of these 4 parking spaces.

Royal Bank

- Assign 1% of the parking spaces as designated parking for people with disabilities and provide appropriate signage.

Town Plaza

- Clearly mark the pavement with the handicap symbol to each of these 4 parking spaces.

Whistler Town Centre

- Relocate 'star' symbol on elevator control panel to comply with current BCBC.
- Replace conventional door knobs on all access doors to a 'U' shaped levered handle.
- Replace automatic door closers with low resistance delayed action closers to reduce resistance to door swing.
- Clearly mark the pavement with the handicap symbol to each of these 4 parking spaces.

Coast Whistler

- Clearly mark the pavement with the handicap symbol to each of these 4 parking spaces.

Connecting Sidewalks & Pathways - Recommendations

General

- By far the single biggest task is to develop basic access through providing accessible connecting pathways throughout the village. This will require common curb ramps at each intersection/route change with consistent tactile information. Curb ramps complying with the City of Vancouver's design for single curb ramps are best suited to these applications. This refitting of the sidewalks should be phased in over 5 years on a priority basis:
 - Main intersections & routes connecting to transit, including all pedestrian crossings
 - Shopping, retail and food and beverage outlets
 - Ancillary routes and residential areas
- The next largest issue is already being addressed to some extent by the municipality. That is the sinking of the brick pavers in locations throughout the village. Recommendations for repair and prevention of this issue are beyond the scope of this report except to say that these uneven surfaces create significant tripping hazard to people using walking aids and people with mobility impairments. It is a common problem with every brick paver installation that we have seen, except where the pavers have been set into a concrete base to minimize movement of the individual pieces. It is strongly recommended that the areas needing repair not be replaced with new pavers, but rather a different surface be developed that can withstand the climate and meet the needs of high volume pathways without frequent maintenance.
- In general terms all stairs and steps in the Village need to provide high contrast nosings or tactile warnings as required by BCBC. Exterior stairs are no less demanding on people with visual impairments than interior ones. These markings are of great importance to seniors, people with visual impairments and where poor environmental conditions can make walking difficult.

Marketplace Pathways

Marketplace Lodge

- Repair the base of the ramp to provide a flush transition to the adjoining sidewalk.
- Relocate handrails to be mounted directly to the sidewalls rather than unnecessarily narrowing the ramp.
- Repair pavers to provide a level landing at the base of the steps.
- Install a second, code compliant handrail on the stairs here.
- Install a code compliant tactile warning and high contrast non-slip nosings on each step.

South Side Shopping Area (units 110 – 129)

- Install guardrails along all unprotected drop offs along this route, particularly where they are adjacent to steps.
- Install a code compliant tactile warning and high contrast non-slip nosings on each step of each set of stairs serving this area.
- Repair broken pavers and develop a level landing at the base of all stairs serving this area.
- Relocate the two outside handrails on the ramp nearest the Lodge to be mounted directly to the adjacent wall to widen available ramp width and remove a tripping hazard.
- Cut back all landscaping material interfering with the use of the staircase handrails along this route.
- Replace the stairs at the loading zone with code compliant steps.
- Install arm rests and back supports on all bench seating in this area.

Marketplace Pathways (continued)

The IGA Store

- Install a code compliant tactile warning and high contrast non-slip nosings on each step in front of the food store.
- Develop a marked pedestrian crossing linking the main parking to the curb ramp located in front of the food store.
- Upgrade the handrails on the IGA stairs to meet current BCBC requirements.

Professional Building (Units 130 -139)

- Develop an accessible route connecting the Professional Building to the Northlands Blvd sidewalk and/or the crossing to the south side of the Northlands Blvd entrance.
- Repair/replace the sloping pavers along the approaches to the building/elevator.
- Elevator Recommendations
 - Create a light coloured floor in the elevator cab
 - Install handrails with a graspable surface in the elevator cab
 - Mark the floor sills at each level in a high contrast colour – preferably signal yellow.
 - Relocate the 'star' symbol to indicate true ground level

Northlands Blvd.

See 'General' above.

Pedestrian Crossings

- Install appropriate curb ramps on both sides of all three crossings.
- Extend the raised crossing into the curb ramp to eliminate grade differences.
- Refresh the painted lines highlighting these crossings.

Lorimer Road

See 'General' above.

- Remove landscaping and develop continuous sidewalk serving this entrance.
- Develop marked pedestrian crossings linking the north side of Lorimer to the new sidewalk entrance to the Marketplace.
- Install a code compliant tactile warning and high contrast non-slip nosings on each step connecting the liquor store to the bus stop.

The Village Stroll Pathways

See 'General' above.

- Install a guard rail to protect users from the unprotected drop offs along the sidewalks serving the liquor store, grocery store and drug store in the Village Square.
- Install code compliant handrails and code compliant tactile warnings and high contrast non-slip nosings on each step of the stairs serving the liquor store, grocery store and drug store in the Village Square.
- There are several small sets of stairs serving various retail and food outlets along the Stroll. Each of these should present a uniform handrail, high contrast nosing and tactile warning treatment.
- Install a code compliant tactile warning and high contrast non-slip nosings on each step of the three grand staircases connecting the Village Stroll to Blackcomb Way, the Village Inn and The Keg.
- Install a code compliant handrail on the stairs serving the Village Inn and The Keg.
- Ensure that the trees planted in the pathway at the north end of the Stroll have no branches lower than 1980mm from the path.
- Highlight the two steps outside of the Blackcomb Lodge with high contrast, non-slip nosings.
- Paint the tree grates gloss black or a high contrast colour to highlight their presence to people with visual impairments. Consideration should be given to re-locating these trees off the pathway completely.
- Develop a second wheelchair access at the north end of the Fitzsimmons to serve this side of the building.

Main Street Pathways

See 'General' above.

- Develop code compliant ramps as part of the integral design of the Alpenglöw and provide additional access to the Summit and Tyndall Lodge for wheelchair users and other people with mobility impairments.

Upper Village Pathways

See 'General' above.

Parking Lot Connecting Stairs

- Develop code compliant, continuous handrails on both sides and down the middle of these stairs – including providing a handrail with a graspable surface.
- Install high contrast, non-slip nosings to each step as required by BCBC.
- Provide a continuous concrete surface on both sides of the stairs and maintain a uniform edging along the entire length of the stairs.

Upper Village Stroll

See 'General' above.

- Highlight the nosings of three sets of stairs built into the grade along this route with high contrast, non-slip nosings.
- There are several small sets of stairs serving various retail and food outlets along the Stroll. Each of these should present a uniform handrail, high contrast nosings and tactile warning treatments.
- Install appropriate curb ramps on both sides of the crossings linking the Upper Village to the Day Parking. Extend the raised crossing into the curb ramp to eliminate grade differences. Refresh the painted lines highlighting this crossing.
- Ensure all steps are in good repair.

2010 Office/Presentation Centre – Recommendations

- Apply a non-slip treatment to the entire deck – including the wheelchair access ramp, as soon as possible.
- Highlight the two steps up to the deck with high contrast, non-slip nosings.
- Ensure that the wheelchair ramp is kept clear at all times.
- Relocate all bulletin boards – inside and out – to a centre line height of 1200mm from the finished floor.
- Purchase a TTY (TDD) for use by office staff when communicating with people who are deaf. This will require a dedicated telephone line.

Municipal Building - Recommendations

- Apply tactile warnings and high contrast nosings to all stairs serving this building and the RCMP building next door.
- Paint the handrails of the side stairs in a high contrast colour.
- Replace the steep ramp on the back door of the office with a wrap around design following the building in order to reduce the grade for users.
- Install a power operated door on the wheelchair ramp entrance.

Village Stroll Public Washrooms - Recommendations

- Relocate the toilet paper dispenser to an operating height 50 – 100mm below the mid-point of the side grab bar.
- Install a toilet seat lid or backrest on all toilets.
- Upgrade the automatic door closers to a low resistance, delayed action closer.
- Replace the paper towel dispenser with a lever operated design.
- Install a coat hook in these washrooms to the standard height of 1200mm from the finished floor and locate on an open wall inside the room.
- Replace existing toilet paper dispensers with standard open roll holders.
- Replace paper towel dispensers requiring good hand function with a lever operated design.
- Relocate paper towel dispensers to a maximum operating height of 1200mm from the finished floor.
- Improve directional signage used to locate washrooms from main pathways.
- Improve room signage utilizing the international symbols, shapes and tactile information.

The Medical Centre – Recommendations

- Develop a continuous sidewalk linking the front entrance to Lorimer Road sidewalks.
- Eliminate the rolled curb at the top of the sloped entrance.
- Reduce the slope in the entrance ramp and resurface to eliminate the brick pavers here.
- Eliminate the garden at the base of the front entrance. Use the space to expand the designated parking space into a van accessible space.
- Remove the concrete barrier located in the designated parking space.

Public Transportation - Recommendations

Bus Stops and Shelters

See Pathways 'General'

- Cut away a portion of the bench in each shelter to create a minimum clear space of 740mm inside the shelter.
- Develop a concrete, flush transition at the entrance of each shelter.

Gondola Transit Exchange

Stairs

Note: this staircase has steps facing both the bus loop and the Mountain Square

- Provide a guardrail to protect users from the unprotected drop off on the Mountain Square side.
- Develop code compliant, continuous handrails on both sides and down the middle of these stairs – including providing a handrail with a graspable surface.
- Install high contrast, non-slip nosings to each step as required by BCBC.
- Eliminate the stone pillars at the top of the stairs.
- Provide a continuous concrete surface on both sides of the stairs and maintain a uniform edging along the entire length of the stairs.
- Eliminate the unmarked asphalt step located half way along the bottom concrete step (on the bus loop side).
- Consideration should be given to eliminating these stairs altogether.

Taxi Service – Recommendations

- Develop accessible service requirements as a part of municipal taxi licensing program.
- Make disability awareness training mandatory for all drivers (Taxi Host Program).
- Require taxi companies to operate a dedicated TTY (TDD) service line.

Intersections – Recommendations

Village Gate & Northlands Blvd

- Install appropriate curb ramps on all four corners of this intersection.
- Replace crossing signal activators with large, easy push buttons.
- Provide high contrast, tactile signage for these new buttons
- Install an audible or tactile crossing signal at this intersection.
- Re-paint pedestrian crossing lines.

Hwy 99 & London Lane/Lake Placid

- Install appropriate curb ramps on all four corners of this intersection, plus on the asphalt islands.
- Provide high contrast, tactile signage for the crossing signal activator buttons.
- Re-locate crossing signal activator buttons to within easy reach from the pathway.

Pedestrian Crossing across Blackcomb Way

- Install appropriate curb ramps on all four corners of this crossing. Consideration should be given to converting this to a single, well equipped crossing.
- Replace crossing signal activators with large, accessible, easy push buttons.
- Provide high contrast, tactile signage for these new buttons
- Install an audible or tactile crossing signal at this intersection.

Blackcomb Way & Lorimer Road

- Install appropriate curb ramps on all four corners of this intersection.
- Replace crossing signal activators with large, easy push buttons.
- Provide high contrast, tactile signage for these new buttons
- Install an audible or tactile crossing signal at this intersection.

Blackcomb Way & Lorimer Road (uncontrolled)

- Install appropriate curb ramps on all four corners of this intersection.
- Re-paint pedestrian crossing lines.

Blackcomb Way & Village Gate

- Install appropriate curb ramps on all three corners of this intersection.
- Develop an accessible route to the day parking lots.
- Re-paint pedestrian crossing lines.
- Remove curb and develop a flush transition and safe route to Village Stroll along the ramped approach.

Lorimer & Northlands Blvd

- Install appropriate curb ramps on all four corners of this intersection.

Conclusion

The Village of Whistler already offers good access for people with mobility impairments. It must be emphasized that from its inception Whistler Village has included wheelchair users in its planning and development. There is however, a broader group of people with disabilities that need to be considered in the overall design and construction. Further, there are some inconsistencies in the access provided across the Village. For people with disabilities, consistent levels of access are an important part of meaningful access. This report calls for improvements to remedy this by ensuring key elements within the Whistler town site meet current code requirements and provide good accessibility throughout.

It is not expected that all of the changes recommended here will be implemented overnight. Instead, a clear plan to develop access needs to be developed that will address these issues over time. Access concerns should be a part of the planning process for every change, improvement or renovation. Not only to make sure that the new installations meet the requirements of people with disabilities, but also to look for opportunities to implement the recommendations made in this document.

It is hoped that this document will not only provide the town planners with a blueprint for improvements, but that it will also serve as a reference to prevent the creation of new barriers to people with disabilities in future developments.

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