

Accessible Community Forum: Accessible Travel in BC Summary Report

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PART I: Panelists

Susie Chant

Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility, elected MLA for North Vancouver.

Marco Chiaramonte

Senior Accessibility and Inclusion Specialist, Vancouver International Airport.

Marco.Chiaramonte@yvr.ca

Kathleen Harvey

Manager of Visitor Services for Destination British Columbia, a provincial Crown corporation that leads the marketing of BC as a tourist destination and promotes the development and growth of the provincial tourism industry.

Kathleen.Harvey@destinationbc.ca

David M Lyons-Black

Personal Travel Business Owner in partnership with Flight Centre, PwD.

david.lyons-black@fcitravel.ca

Panel hosted by Ryan Clarkson

PART II: Forum

- 87 total EventBrite registrants
- 41 total Zoom attendees (including ConnecTra staff, panelists and hosts)

PART III: SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY

104 total respondents participated in the survey.

- Respondents' relationship with the disability community
 - 65 -respondents have one or more disabilities
 - 31 -respondents one or more invisible disabilities
 - 15 -respondents are the primary care aid for a PWD
 - 5 -respondents were a healthcare professional or another type of aid for a PWD
 - 21 -respondents are the parent or family member of a PWD
 - 4 -respondents other
- Types of disabilities respondents live with: most to least
 - Physical disability (eg mobility)(89)
 - Non-visible disability (21)
 - Hearing impairment (21)
 - Cognitive disability (18)
 - Visual impairment (17)
 - Speech impairment (13)
 - Mental Health (12)
 - Learning disability (10)
 - Prefer not to say (2)
 - Other (6)
- Types of support devices respondents use: most to least
 - Electric wheelchair or scooter (51)
 - Manual wheelchair (44)
 - Companion or support person (35)
 - Cane, walker or crutches (28)

- Prosthetic or orthotic devices (15)
 - Cognitive aids (13)
 - Other (12)
 - Hearing aids or cochlear implant (9)
 - Custom adapted tools, switches and utensils (8)
 - White cane (6)
 - Communication system (5)
 - None (5)
 - Guide dog or support animal (4)
- Types of support devices and accessibility required for respondents traveling overnight: most to least
 - Accessible shower or bath (68)
 - Accessible toilet (60)
 - Fully accessible hotel room (53)
 - Companion or support person (53)
 - Electric wheelchair or scooter (46)
 - Accessible bed (45)
 - Manual wheelchair (39)
 - Cane, walker or crutches (24)
 - Other (24)
 - Prosthetic or orthotic devices (12)
 - Cognitive aids (11)
 - Custom adapted tools, switches and utensils (11)
 - Hearing aids or cochlear implant (10)
 - White cane (6)
 - Communication system (5)
 - None (5)
 - Guide dog or support animal (4)
- Respondent ages:
 - 6 (under 18)

- 1 (18-24)
- 7 (25-34)
- 17 (35-44)
- 23 (45-54)
- 21 (55-64)
- 17 (65-74)
- 10 (75+)
- 2 (didn't say)

- Most respondents are currently located in the Metro Vancouver area. Most common location was the Vancouver area. Other responses included Victoria area, Kelowna, Campbell River, Merritt, Grandforks, Prince George, Calgary, Halifax, Ottawa
- Most respondents closest airport is YVR
- 85% of respondents said accessible travel opportunities were very important to them
- 82% of respondents would like to travel within BC, 87% of respondents within Canada, and 80% internationally
- 72% of respondents travel less than once a year, while 77% of respondents would love to travel more if it was accessible to them
- Respondents would prefer to travel by plane most, followed by car, then train or boat, least popular was by bus
- Respondents would prefer to travel with their partner or family most, followed by friends, then a caregiver/aid, least popular was travelling with an organized group or with a guide
- 19 respondents prefer to travel alone
- The top 3 kinds of trips respondents **have taken** are to city destinations and local day trips to both indoor and outdoor locations. Many have gone on weekend getaways.
- Less than 40% of respondents have been camping, gone on a road trip, to a cabin, or gone to rural destinations
- Less 14% have gone on canoe/kayak trips or hiking trips.
- The top 3 kinds of trips respondents **want to take** are for rest and relaxation, food and culture, followed by historic (site seeing, museums, etc), beach destinations and outdoor adventure. Least of interest are activities for kids, volunteering, or educational trips
- Top reasons why respondents like to travel are to see new places, relax and visit with family and friends, try something new, and for mental well-being. Least of interest is being active, meeting new people, or improving skills or knowledge.

- 78% of respondents said 3-10 nights is the ideal length for a trip
- Currently most respondents plan travel by doing their own research
- Most find information by doing internet searches, second is word-of-mouth, followed by organizations dedicated to people with disabilities
- Most respondents didn't know of any resources specifically for accessible travel
- When selecting destinations, top priorities of respondents are accessible buildings and facilities, reliable and accessible transportation, and accessible sidewalks and pathways
- When planning on how to get to their destination the biggest consideration for respondents was accessibility, followed by the most convenient.
- When planning on how to get around once at destination, most respondents said rental car, followed by taxi, wheelchair or scooter, and bus.
- When planning on where to stay, wheelchair accessibility and non-smoking rooms were the biggest consideration for respondents
- Most respondents said it was important for them to have available and accessible health care at destination and most said they would buy health insurance
- Most accessible travel locations in BC according to respondents are cities, followed by resort destinations, and towns. The least accessible BC locations are rural and backcountry, followed by the Gulf Islands.
- The most desired BC locations to travel to if they were more accessible was the Gulf Islands
- Most respondents said that inadequate accessible facilities and transportation were the biggest barriers to travel
- Respondents said that the most important thing to make travel easier would be for there to be more organizations/companies dedicated to accessible travel, followed by more accessibility at tourist attractions, well-trained staff at more destinations, financial resources and more acceptance of people living with disabilities.
- Most respondents have experienced excessive wait times at airports if they needed assistance
- 1/2 of respondents with support aids have had difficulty checking in a mobility device and 1/3 have had an airline damage it
- Of the 85 respondents who use a wheelchair or similar 35 have had their wheelchair damaged by an airline
- 2/3 of respondents don't feel comfortable using the restroom on a flight
- Most respondents were at least somewhat satisfied with accessibility at their local airport
- Most respondents were at least somewhat satisfied with accessibility on BC Ferries
- Most respondents have never travelled on VIA Rail and weren't able to speak to its accessibility

- Almost all respondents said how important the need is for universal design, accessible and inclusive tourist attractions such as theme parks, hotels, restaurants and tours and most everyone wanted all destinations in BC to be accessible.

-Resources, organizations and/or companies that specialize in accessible travel(according to respondents):

AirBNB,

<https://wheelchairtravel.org/>,

Travel for all,

Scootaround,

Special Needs At Sea,

Sage travel,

DisabledTravelers.com,

Canada Disabled Tours,

The Best WheelchairAccessible, <https://gettecla.com/blogs/news/your-complete-guide-to-the-best-wheelchair-accessible-vacations>,

Cory Lee's blog,

Accessible adventures

Parks Canada

Flight Center; <http://www.undiscoveredbritain.com/>

Wheel The World

SCI-BC

Easy Access Travel (company is in the States)

travel agent at Capri travel in Kelowna

-Accessible Destinations in BC (according to respondents):

Victoria, BC

Osoyoos

Cape Scott on Vancouver Island

Parksville

Whistler

French Beach camping, Vancouver Island

-Non-Accessible Destinations in BC (according to respondents):

Cranbrook

Vernon

Fernie, BC

Hope, BC

Saltspring Island

Harrison Hotsprings

Many places in Vancouver and Victoria

Chilliwack

Many local parks

Williams Lake

Dawson Creek BC

Galiano Island

Prince George

Mission, BC

Tofino

Audain Art Museum

Telegraph Cove

-Improvements to Accessibility on Airlines (according to respondents):

-Over 30 answers saying people should be able to load and stay in their own wheelchair on airplanes

-Accessible in-flight entertainment system, accessible assistance buttons, and more lighting in the plane washrooms.

-More information around accessibility

-more respect and easier accessibility that doesn't require special treatment

-Better signage and more knowledgeable staff

- Let me bring my wheelchair on the plane and tie it down... Allow a bigger space for PWDs on plane
- Accessibility information needs to be easily accessed on the internet, finding information is time consuming and frustrating.
- Have accommodations for power wheelchairs. Especially on airplanes. Being able to stay in power chair
- Airlines need to be able to board passengers in their wheelchairs.
- It would be beneficial if they thought about the disabled community in the design stage of what ever they are doing. Not as an after thought.
- Teach staff basic ASL
- Information related to the health and safety of my guide dog and me which is communicated at time of making the reservation, is either simplified or dropped between the reservations or check in process and the destination! This I perceive is less of that of agent training and much more of that of the encoding which is documented on the passenger's reservation file to accurately communicate down the line stations,

Improvements to Accessibility on BC Ferries (according to respondents):

- Multiple answers that accessing elevators is difficult and people are not always loaded close to the elevators
- A wider staircase on ferries
- More information around accessibility
- more respect and easier accessibility that doesn't require special treatment
- Better signage and more knowledgeable staff
- Accessible bathrooms when no elevator is an option on bc ferries
- Doesn't have accessible washrooms in the main public washrooms....they are in a separate location. However when you go into the main washrooms, you would expect to be an Accessible washroom there and there's no signage to say where it's located.
- Has terrible accessible parking, won't let you sit in the car to be more comfortable, elevator always packed with able bodied travellers
- Accessibility information needs to be easily accessed on the internet, finding information is time consuming and frustrating.
- It would be beneficial if they thought about the disabled community in the design stage of what ever they are doing. Not as an after thought
- Teach staff basic ASL
- Accessibility for power chair to tables, windows on ferries

-Adult sized change tables available. With BC Ferries, all vehicles that will be unloading a mobility device should be given priority boarding. We've often arrived well within our reservation window and have been told that we need to join the regular lineup (or that we should have arrived hours earlier) in order to board first. It should be easy to ensure vehicles with mobility devices go on first (there usually aren't that many per sailing) and it's essential in order to be able to park near the elevators and with enough space to unload the wheelchair. It seems to really depend on who is working at the check-in booths. Some are very accommodating and get us to the front without issues, while others don't seem unwilling to help us. That said, we have always found that those working on the ferry directing the vehicles into the parking spots to be very helpful, but sometimes by the time we are on board, the accessible parking spots near the elevators are filled.

-When I've gone on the ferry, despite getting the accessible window card, they didn't load my car near the elevator.

What trends would you like to see in "accessible travel/tourism in BC" for the coming years?

-upgrades to old infrastructure

-A BC map with accessibility related info, i.e. accessible washroom or restaurant locators;

-Universal design in all destinations and public transportation stations.

-Easy accessible information to accessible travel in BC.

-I would love to see itineraries, like Lonely Planet does, where you could go somewhere and know what amenities, attractions and restaurants were accessible

-Understanding neurodiversity for staff

-Better and more accessible trails in parks

-Accessible hotels in Fraser valley and beyond

-Adding scent reduction as an accessibility factor

-More accessible taxi/uber/lyft

-Accessible beaches

-I would like for accessibility to become a requirement, and not just a suggestion. I would love for every park to have accessible trails and for all public beaches to have accessibility mats. For those that have the mats already, it would be great for them to be out from May-end of September, instead of just from July-August.

-Wheel chairs on trains

-Hire disabled people to inform and advise. Hire disabled passenger liaisons.