

April 6, 2023

To: Shawn Dahlen
Chief Administrative Officer
Peace River Regional District

RE: INCLUSIVE AND CARING COMMUNITY PROJECT

Urban Matters CCC Ltd. is excited to submit this proposal to create a collaborative Accessibility Strategy for North-Eastern BC. Our company was founded to work with communities and organizations to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, society. As our social systems become more complex than ever, we are thrilled to work alongside the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) and the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality (NRRM), as well as member communities, advance accessibility in Northeastern BC. We see this project as an opportunity to further these local governments work towards creating inclusive communities and improving lives. This project is focused on meeting the requirements of the Accessible BC Act for proscribed organizations. The result of the proposed workplan below is to ensure that participating communities are compliant by the required date (September 1, 2023). This work will also build the foundation for further action on accessibility by creating a shared vision, establishing an active Accessibility Committee, determining shared and unique goals of participating communities, and collaboratively identifying next steps for implementation. We propose to undertake this work between now and mid-September 2023, co-creating an actionable strategy for moving forward as a final stage of the work.

WHO WE ARE

The Urban Matters team is made up of interdisciplinary consultants who specialize in affordable housing, health and social planning, community development, Indigenous well-being, and social innovation. We bring expertise in engagement and facilitation techniques, systems-thinking, asset and change management, effective governance, conflict resolution, values-based decision making, and human-centered design. As a sister company to Urban Systems Ltd., our team can also draw on a wide range of expertise outside of our primary practice areas, including land economics, landscape architecture, geographic information systems, and engineering services. As a result, the range of services and expertise that we can offer is unparalleled within western Canada.

Through our work, we strive to convene new collaborations across disciplines and perspectives to better understand and define challenges and uncover opportunities for solutions. We bring the right players to the table at the right times to break down pre-conceived notions and biases to see the opportunity associated with each challenge. We are conveners, facilitators, listeners, and change management leaders, who understand the inherent value of process-driven outcomes.

OUR APPROACH TO ACCESSIBILITY

In alignment with the Accessible BC Act, we approach accessibility as the removal of barriers to full participation in society for all people with a disability. The Accessible BC Act defines disability as an inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction with an impairment and a barrier. This understanding of disability comes from the social constructionist approach to disability which refers to the idea that people experience disability because of social and cultural contexts that present barriers. For example, a person who uses a wheelchair is only prevented from full participation if the built environment prevents them from access. A person who has dyslexia may be seen as unintelligent, even though dyslexia is not an indicator of intellectual ability and simply requires access to non-text based teachings and testing strategies.

Our approach for this project is to work to build the structure and capacity of partner governments to co-create and co-actualize an Accessibility Strategy that recognizes the shared and unique accessibility barriers communities in Northeast BC face. We are committed to demonstrating accessibility throughout this process by using accessible document design, accessible meeting planning and formats, and ensuring all participants are respectfully accommodated and empowered to participate. We will look beyond physical access and seek to identify barriers and solutions to the many barriers people with disabilities face.

DEFINITIONS OF TYPES OF BARRIERS

Barriers for people with impairments (physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive) can be created by attitudes, environments, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies. Accessibility is the removal of barriers in all of these areas. Creating a collaborative accessibility strategy will be best completed by considering barriers in each of these areas. We will work with participating communities to identify ways to address barriers in all categories.

- **Attitudinal**– when people think or act based on false ideas.
- **Physical** – physical obstacles that make access difficult.
- **Information or communication** – when communication methods do not reach people with disabilities
- **Systemic** – When an organizations policies or procedures are not inclusive.
- **Technology** – When technology cannot be accessed by people with disabilities.
- **Sensory** – When lights, sounds or smells prevent participation in an environment.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLABORATION

Collaborative approaches to accessibility amongst organizations in Northeastern BC is a promising opportunity to not only increase connectedness amongst communities, but also to improve outcomes for people with disabilities across the region. The geography of the area makes a collaborative approach critical for meeting the aims of improving accessibility for all residents. The mix of rural and urban, high and low population density areas in the region means that services (such as medical, post-secondary education, some types of employment, public service offices, etc.) are concentrated in regional hubs. One communities' actions affect all the surrounding communities outcomes. Advances in technology are creating greater and greater opportunities for services to be delivered remotely, but this is not a solution for all scenarios and technology itself requires careful investment and consideration of its accessibility. Taking a regional approach can support all residents to fully participate and access opportunities and services within their own community and across the region. This regional collaboration is an opportunity for an equitable approach to accessibility in a region that is diverse, geographically vast, lots of distance between communities, and where access to services for most residents of the area is outside of their community, making accessible servicing critical.

We are very excited about this project's potential to improve the lives of people living in Northeastern BC through improved accessibility. The collaborative approach being proposed is unique and we feel demonstrates a practical and relationship-based method for improving accessibility. We would be honored to participate and support this process alongside your communities.

Sincerely,



Isha Matous-Gibbs

Social Health and Wellness Planner

Urban Matters CCC Ltd.

ABOUT US

Urban Matters CCC is one of Canada’s first Community Contribution Companies (CCC), incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of our parent company, Urban Systems, in 2014 and created to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate in and uniquely contribute to society. Urban Systems is an employee-owned inter-disciplinary consulting firm that employs almost 450 people. Since its conception in 1975, Urban Systems has earned a solid reputation for client service and project delivery. It is committed to working in the best interests of our clients to achieve their goals while strategically looking for opportunities to add value through innovation, integration and efficiency.

The Urban Matters team is made up of interdisciplinary consultants who specialize in affordable housing, health and social planning, community development, Indigenous well-being, and social innovation. We bring expertise in engagement and facilitation techniques, systems-thinking, asset and change management, effective governance, conflict resolution, values-based decision making, and human-centered design. Our team also draws on expertise from Urban Systems professionals who provide complementary skills such as community planning, land economics, landscape architecture, geographic information systems, and engineering.

We convene new collaborations across disciplines and perspectives to better understand and define challenges and uncover opportunities. We bring the right players to the table at the right times to break down pre-conceived notions and biases to see the opportunity associated with each challenge. We are conveners, facilitators, listeners, and change management leaders, who understand the inherent value of process-driven outcomes.



CONVENE

We get into the fabric of a community and the challenges faced. We convene a diverse mix of people – people both experiencing the challenges and those placed to do something about them. Our aim is to integrate those voices to define the problems and explore solutions together.



CONSULT

We source the data, crunch the numbers, make sense of and connect things in sometimes surprising ways. Our work is inclusive and aims to incorporate views, opinions, and suggestions from a range of sources across community, corporate and levels of government.



CREATE

We incubate new ventures and relationships. Where an existing delivery partnership does not exist, we build it. We take concepts to reality and bring partners and funding along the way. In the process of our engagements, we build capacity across the community to understand the issue and participate in delivery of solutions.

OUR TEAM

Our team has the capacity and experience to complete this work. Our team has been working together for several years on a diverse range of projects and we have a strong team dynamic that allows us to respond to projects effectively. We have identified a core project team to meet the objectives of this project.



ISHA MATOUS-GIBBS | PROJECT LEAD AND ACCESSIBILITY ADVISOR

Isha is a planner who brings her past work in homeless shelters and an undergraduate in Health and Community Services to her role as a Social Health and Well-Being Planner with Urban Matters. Her focus is on bringing a Social Determinants of Health lens to the work to ensure that our communities grow equitably, collaboratively and with consideration for well-being. Isha has skills in research, analysis, writing, engagement, facilitation, and deep critical analysis. Working in a range of contexts, Isha's career has focused on building resiliency with individuals, groups, and communities through collaborative, cross-sector and interdisciplinary group action, and meaningful, strengths-based dialogues and collaborative projects.

Isha will serve as the project lead, bringing experience and knowledge about the Accessible BC Act, as well as experience driving collaborative and person with lived experience led strategies.



JAKE PAPINEAU | SOCIAL PLANNING CONSULTANT (HE/HIM)

Jake Papineau is an enthusiastic community consultant with 8 years of professional experience in a wide range of topics, such as community planning, land use development, engagement and consultation, recreation and culture, sustainability and resiliency, data collection analysis, and strategy development at multiple scales including for municipalities, businesses, and non-profits. As a problem solver interested in tackling unique challenges, he is excited about digging into more projects related to economic development, strategic planning and the future of work. He is also expanding his knowledge in economic impact assessment to support decision-makers in making investments in social infrastructures. Jake has a Master of Planning from Dalhousie University, an undergraduate in History and Human Geography from the University of Alberta and is a PhD candidate in Rural Studies at the University of Guelph. Jake has held national scholarships for his research, has published work in international academic journals, and has been recognized for his teaching efforts while a graduate student.

Jake will directly complement Isha's engagement and convening work, as well as will contribute to strategy drafting and development.



JASMINE PATRICK | COMMUNICATIONS

Jasmine Patrick is a professional communicator and community consultant, driven to create safe and engaging spaces for communities to thrive and grow. With nearly 12 years of experience in the field, she specializes in communication and engagement strategy, visual and accessible communication materials, issues and crisis management, and media relations. Passionate about social equity and accessible community engagement at the local level, Jasmine brings human-centred design thinking and behavioural economics into her practice to achieve measurable results.

Jasmine has completed her IAP2 Foundations training and is currently Treasurer of the IAP2 BC & Yukon Chapter Board of Directors. In her previous employment, Jasmine worked as a communications strategist at the municipal and provincial levels, including at the City of Toronto, City of Kelowna, Kelowna International Airport, and various ministries at the Ontario Government. She earned an MBA at Rotman

School of Management at the University of Toronto, an honours degree in Communications from York University, and a Graduate Certificate in Public Relations from Humber College.

Jasmine will provide communications skills and expertise to the project.



PAULINE SYDENHAM | COMMUNICATIONS

Pauline Sydenham (she/her) is a creative and collaborative communications professional with a passion for translating complex ideas into compelling stories with impact. With experience in journalism and corporate communications, her key areas of expertise include storytelling and editing, social media, and communications strategy. Pauline previously worked at the University of Calgary’s medical school where she gained insight into the social factors that can greatly influence health outcomes as well as the role of communications in reducing stigma and inequities in health. She incorporates this knowledge and her lived experience in her work as Communications Specialist to develop thoughtful messaging and inclusive communications practices. Pauline holds a degree in Journalism and certifications in International Communications, Public Relations, and IAP2. She is grateful to work and raise her family in Calgary, Alberta on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region, also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

Pauline will provide communications skills and expertise to the project.



KENNA WILLIAMS | PROJECT COORDINATION

Kenna is a dedicated Project Coordinator with Urban Systems. She brings over 28 years of experience in Business Administration. Her background includes a focus on high executive level of support for company and project managers. Her primary mission is to maximize the effectiveness of project managers by handling a variety of administrative details so they are free to focus on the professional and technical aspects of their projects. She is responsible for coordinating the administrative details of projects with emphasis on contract administration, general project administration, and liaison with the accounting department, correspondence and document control, quality control, scheduling, meeting coordination and all internal administration aspects of projects.

Kenna will provide support with project coordination. Kenna will manage meeting invitations, responding to recruitment inquiries, and other management related to ensuring participants and partners have the information they need for participation.



EDWARD STANFORD | SENIOR ADVISOR

Edward is a community consultant specializing in assisting small and medium-sized communities realize their dreams! An urban designer with expertise in taking innovation, safety, accessibility, and sustainability as reference points for community enhancement and then combining these with all levels of civil engineering infrastructure, Edward loves to see a superior end product for the client, the general public and the environment. Edward’s design skills span both ends of the spectrum, with a firm grasp of all elements that constitute planning theory & design and the ability to apply this to the current and long-range goals of a community. Edward is a Principal with Urban Systems based in our Fort St. John office with more than twenty years’ experience working to improve, enhance and develop communities in the magical Peace River region, Northwestern B.C., Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

Edward will be a senior advisor to ensure this project reflects the unique context of the region and includes the right people for the success of this project.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Our design team has developed skills in creating accessible documents. Their role in this project will be to ensure that all documents provided follow accessibility best practices for communications, including review of website content.

Urban Matters	Partners
Schedule meetings, host using online meeting platforms, monitor registration, RSVPs for meetings, manage contact lists for partners and AC.	Ensure a delegate is available for project meetings. Participate in meetings, including reviewing background materials provided.
Create content for communications, recruitment, and presentations related to the project.	Share content and communications as needed through organization websites, social media, and contact lists.
Create a recruitment strategy for the accessibility committee.	Promote the recruitment locally and make recommendations for local persons who may be interested/ qualified for the committee.
Report back on outcomes of workshops and reflect input in the strategy.	Ensure that relevant information is shared in a timely manner. Review documents provided for comment within two weeks of receiving them. Support with writing or providing content for local area sections. *For cost reduction, co-authoring or providing draft content for other sections may support this work.
Create a communications strategy that shares relevant information with target audiences and includes information to be used with reports and website content for compliance with the Accessible BC Act.	Complete reports using information required and post relevant information to ensure compliance.

BUDGET

Budget provided below includes travel, administrative costs, and disbursements. It does not include GST, participant honoraria payments or event hosting costs.

	Total (Rounded)	Percentage of Total Budget
Phase 0. Project Management		
Task 0.1 Project Kick Off with Client	\$700	
Task 0.2 Team Kick Off	\$1,200	
Task 0.3 Team Check ins	\$2,900	
Task 0.4 Project Management	\$3,500	
Subtotal	\$8,300	11%
Phase 1. Understanding Context and Gathering Partners		
Task 1.1 Understanding Accessibility Legislation	\$2,900	
Task 1.2 Gathering Partners	\$15,500	
Task 1.3 Understanding Local Context	\$5,500	

Task 1.4 Summary Report	\$5,300	
Subtotal	\$29,200	39%
Phase 2. Recruitment Campaign		
Task 2.1 Campaign Materials	\$2,800	
Task 2.2 Manage Recruitment - OPTIONAL	\$2,800	
Task 2.3 Kick Off Meeting	\$2,100	
Task 2.4 Workshops for Strategy Creation	\$13,100	
Task 2.5 Strategy Draft	\$9,600	
Task 2.6 Strategy Finalization	\$5,600	
Subtotal	\$15,200	21%
Phase 3. Communications and Legislative Requirements Completion		
Task 3.1 Communications Strategy	\$2,600	
Task 3.2 Communications Content Development	\$5,800	
Task 3.3 Ensuring Compliance	\$3,400	
Subtotal	\$11,800	16%
Phase 4. Determining Next Steps		
Task 4.1 Advisory Committee Meeting	\$2,300	
Task 4.2 Partner Wrap-up Meeting	\$2,300	
Task 4.3 Scoping Next Steps	\$4,900	
Subtotal	\$9,500	13%
Total Hours		
Percentage of Total Hours		
Total, including all fees and expenses, EXCLUDING GST		
	\$74,000	
GST (5%)	\$3,700	
Total, including all fees, expenses, and GST	\$77,700	