

Victoria International Airport

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT 2025



Table of Content

GENERAL	3
Alternate Format(s)	3
Feedback Process	3
Contact Options	4
Social Media links	4
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	5
ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT	6
OUR AIRPORT	7
Airport Facts	7
Division of Responsibilities	7
Responsibilities of our partners	8
OUR PROGRESS REPORT	9
Comprehensive Consultation Process	10
Employee Consultation (March 14, 2025)	10
Community and Stakeholder Consultation (March 18, 2025)	10
ProHara Accessibility Advisory Team (March 11, 2025)	10
SEVEN PRIORITY AREAS	10
1. Employment	11
2. Built Environment	11
3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	12
4. Communication (Other than ICT)	13
5. Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities	14
6. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services	15
7. Transportation	16
Compliance with CTA	17
Accessibility-Related Regulations	17
Feedback Integration	17
Integration of Consultations and Initiatives	17
Needs Identification	17
Outcomes and Benefits	22
FINAL THOUGHTS	23

GENERAL

Whether you are a passenger, an employee, or someone requesting an alternate accessible format of this Accessibility Progress Report - or if you have feedback about the report or have encountered any accessibility barriers at Victoria International Airport (YYJ) please contact us using the options provided below.

Let us know who you are, or feel free to remain anonymous. Either way, we value your input and look forward to hearing from you. We will acknowledge your message using the same method you used to contact us (unless it was sent anonymously without a way to respond) and will follow up with a prompt reply.



Victoria Airport Authority (VAA) remains firmly dedicated to enhancing accessibility at YYJ. This Accessibility Progress Report, aligned with the Provisions of the Accessible Canada Act (ACA), Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations (ATPRR), Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations (ATPDR), Air Transportation Regulations, and the Canada Transportation Act, clearly illustrates the progress made toward a fully inclusive airport environment.

Our designated Passenger Experience and Programs Officer, Security and Terminal Operations will review and keep records of all feedback received.

Alternate Format(s)

Upon request using our Contact Options below, we can provide you with an accessible alternate format (e.g., print, large print, Braille, audio format, or an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology) of the following documents:

- this Accessibility Plan, and/or
- our Feedback Process.

Feedback Process

Use our Contact Options below, if you wish to provide us with feedback about any of the following items:

- this Accessibility Plan including how we are implementing it,
- our Feedback Process, or
- any barriers you may have encountered within our airport.

Contact Options

Communicate with us using our website's online form, email, phone, mailing address, or social media links, as outlined below:

Passenger Experience and Programs Officer, Security and Terminal Operations

Mailing Address:

201-1640 Electra Blvd
Sidney, BC V8L 5V4

Email:
accessibility@yyj.ca

Phone number:
250-953-7535

Online feedback

Social Media links

 [@Victoria.International.Airport](https://www.facebook.com/VictoriaInternationalAirport)

 [@fly_yyj](https://twitter.com/fly_yyj)

 [@yyjairport](https://www.instagram.com/yyjairport)





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to acknowledge that Victoria Airport Authority operates on the unceded territory of the WSÁNEĆ People whose historical relationship to the land continues to this day.

We are committed to further strengthening our relationship with the Tseycum First Nation, Tsartlip First Nation, Tsawout First Nation, and Pauquachin First Nation through collaborative partnership in the airport's future operational and developmental goals.

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

At Victoria International Airport, we believe that every passenger deserves a friendly, efficient, and easy to navigate travel experience. Our team believes that our employees deserve a welcoming place to work, where every employee, including those with disabilities, can thrive and contribute. We want to meet the needs of our passengers and employees, striving to surpass expectations, prioritizing accessibility and inclusivity in all we do, setting new benchmarks and pioneering innovative solutions wherever possible.



“At Victoria International Airport, we strive to make our airport experience smoother, safer and Better for Everybody.”

Arising from the Accessible Canada Act, our work is grounded in the principle of “Nothing Without Us”, meaning that we are committed to consulting and connecting with those who have lived experience. We value the voices of our employees, passengers, disability groups, and community organizations and we will continue to meaningfully involve them in our accessibility journey.

We want to continue to be a leader and innovator in accessibility for small airports and to provide our community with accessible and universally designed spaces and services that make our airport experience smoother, safer, and Better for Everybody.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth M. Brown'.

Elizabeth M. Brown

President and CEO

Victoria Airport Authority

OUR AIRPORT

Airport Facts

Victoria International Airport (YYJ) is the 11th busiest airport in Canada, serving 1.9 million passengers annually. We aim to provide a safe, secure, sustainable, and efficient airport and are proud to create prosperity for our region by connecting Greater Victoria with the world.

We are located approximately 25 kilometres north of Victoria, British Columbia with a terminal that is small enough to be ultra-convenient yet very modern. Extensive improvements and upgrades have been completed over the last several years and there are more to come! YYJ was rated one of the top ten most-loved airports in the world by CNN Travel and was the 2012, 2014, 2020, and 2024 winner of 'Best Regional Airport in North America under 2 million passengers' by Airports Council International.

Division of Responsibilities

Victoria Airport Authority (VAA) has managed the safe and secure operations at YYJ on behalf of the surrounding communities since April 1, 1997.

To accommodate the diverse needs of passengers and employees, VAA is accountable for:

- Hiring and managing the VAA workforce.
- Guiding and onboarding other organizations.
- Developing and maintaining an accessible built environment with amenities and services:
 - Public parking
 - An award-winning curbside assistance program
 - Infrastructure e.g., kiosks, washrooms, animal relief areas
 - Providing wheelchairs and, issuing support person escort passes
- Developing accessible programs, technologies, services, and facilities.

Responsibilities of our partners:

VAA partners include airlines, Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), along with many other contracted service providers

- Airlines provide mobility assistance and escort passengers through the check-in process, to the gate, and on-board for departures as well as upon arrival from aircraft to the baggage claim area until baggage is retrieved.
- Airlines ensure proper handling and stowage of baggage and mobility aids to confirm safe and timely arrival at their destination.
- CATSA provides security screening.
- CBSA provides customs services.
- Food, beverage, and retail services partners enrich the overall airport experience.
- Contracted service providers also handle other components of passenger assistance, parking services, and customer service.

Highlights of our accessibility achievements in the last 5 years:

- 2021 – Achieved Accessibility Certified Gold under the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) program.

[Press Release](#)

- 2021 – Our award-winning Curbside Assistance Program from Tourism Vancouver Island.

[Press Release](#)

- 2023 – Launched YYJ Autism Aviation Day.

[Press Release](#)

- 2023 – Launched Sensory Resource Kit.

[Press Release](#)

- 2024 – Developed on-line Accessibility Training Program with the Canadian Airports Council (CAC).

- 2024 – VAA named one of BC's Top 100 Employers for 2024.

[Press Release](#)

- 2024 – Launched MagnusCards® Program.

[Press Release](#)



OUR PROGRESS REPORT

The Accessibility Progress Report is a federally mandated update required under the ACA and its supporting regulations, including the ATPRR. It serves to publicly demonstrate how VAA is implementing the commitments outlined in its multi-year Accessibility Plan, specifically detailing the actions taken to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities. The report ensures transparency and accountability while highlighting progress across seven key focus areas, reflecting VAA's ongoing commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible airport experience for all.



Comprehensive Consultation Process

In collaboration with ProHara Accessibility Inc., VAA conducted extensive stakeholder consultations throughout 2024 and early 2025, integrating crucial feedback directly into strategic initiatives. We engaged in three meaningful and accessible consultations with passengers with disabilities, our community and advocacy partners, and our employees. We held these sessions virtually to maximize accessible participation. To foster an inclusive environment, we contacted participants in advance to inquire about any accommodations they might need. Based on their responses, we provided American Sign Language interpretation, live captioning, verbal descriptions of images presented, and accessible materials to enhance their participation.

Employee Consultation (March 14, 2025):

Employees highlighted a clear need for detailed accessibility training and explicit internal accessibility policies. As a direct result, VAA launched mandatory accessibility training sessions in November 2024, with an initial participation rate of 95% across departments.

Community and Stakeholder Consultation (March 18, 2025):

Consultation with a high number of community stakeholders including Special needs and Parents Advisory and Advocacy Council (SPAAC), BC Transit, and disability advocacy organizations shaped the enhancement of the YYJ's flagship Curbside Assistance Program and informed the accelerated deployment of sensory and cognitive accessibility tools like Magnus-Cards® (fully launched January 2025).

ProHara Accessibility Advisory Team (March 11, 2025):

Feedback directly guided the successful implementation of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program (November 2024), significantly improving airport experiences for passengers with invisible disabilities.

Seven Priority Areas

1. Employment
2. The Built Environment
3. Information and Communication Technologies
4. Communications, other than Information and Communication Technologies
5. The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities
6. The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services
7. Transportation

1. Employment

The Accessibility working group recognized that disability is often the forgotten “D” within DEI initiatives. To address this gap, we’ve taken several concrete steps. We’ve enhanced our internal intranet by adding a dedicated accessibility section, providing our employees with easy access to relevant resources. We’ve also updated our inclusion statement to explicitly reflect our commitment to accessibility, reaffirming that every individual, regardless of ability, is valued and supported within our organization.

And:

- explore ways to improve recruitment and hiring.
- enhance accessibility of built environment (universal design standards).

Future improvement will include establishing a clear accessibility and accommodations policy.

2. Built Environment

Significant enhancements reinforce VAA’s commitment to inclusive infrastructure:

Rick Hansen Accessibility Certification Gold (Achieved 2021; Renewal targeted 2026):

Demonstrates sustained excellence in built-environment accessibility.

Upper Hold Room Expansion Project (2025–2027):

Integrates universal design principles, with a dedicated accessibility consultant ensuring proactive removal and prevention of barriers.

Enhanced Tactile Guidance Systems (January 2025):

Dramatically improved passenger independence and wayfinding, reducing reliance on assistance by approximately 40% in surveyed terminal zones.

And:

Future improvements include introducing a dedicated Curbside Management Program.

3. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

VAA prioritized technological advancements significantly improving airport accessibility:

Website Redesign (December 2024):

Redesigned website fully meets WCAG 2.1 Level AA criteria, incorporating UserWay accessibility software. Initial feedback indicates a significant rise (approximately. 70%) in ease of digital navigation for users with diverse accessibility needs.

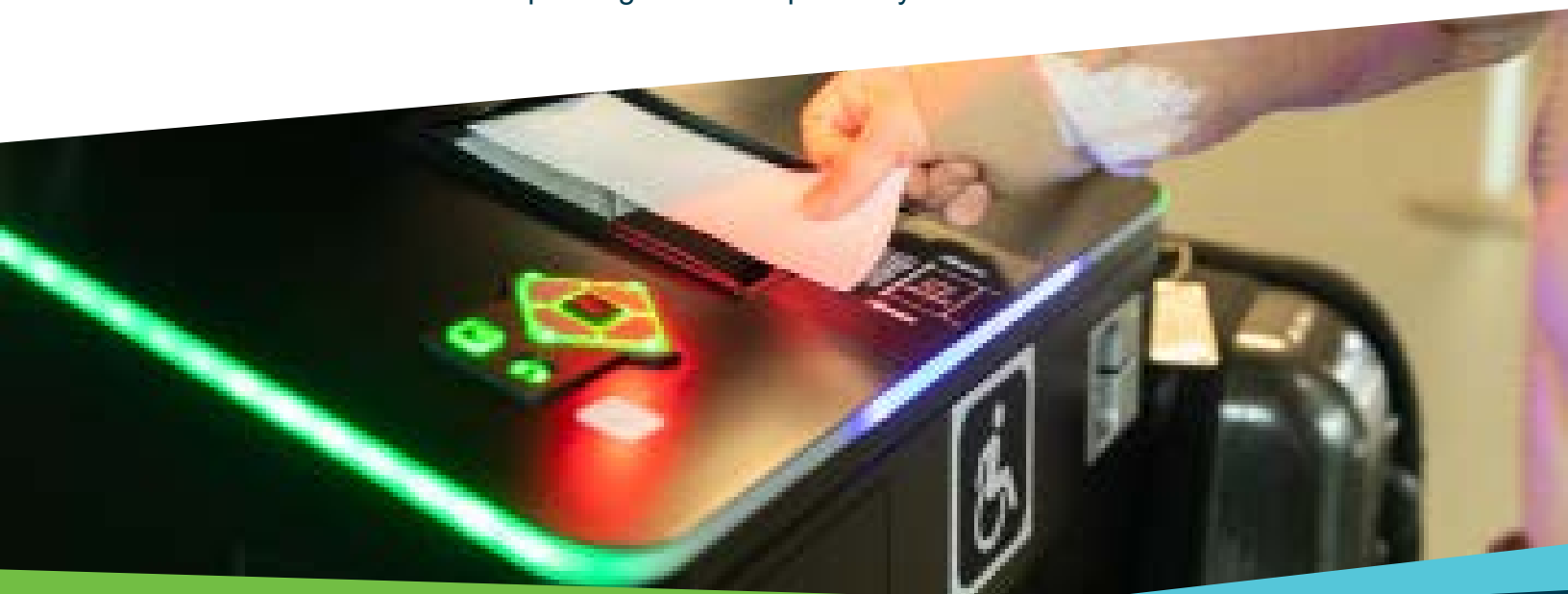
Integrated Flight Information Systems (March 2025):

Real-time visual paging systems were integrated with flight information displays, notably benefiting passengers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, based on passenger feedback collected via surveys.

And:

- Continuing to explore and incorporate the majority of ICT commitments into the terminal building expansion, with planning for the East Passenger Departure scheduled for 2025 and construction planned for 2026.
- Successfully approved and procured the installation of a hearing loop at the Information Desk in Arrivals, with expected completion by Fall 2025.
- Enhanced auto-response information for Curbside Assistance reservations, providing detailed instructions and photos.

Future enhancements will consider the inclusion of accessible CBSA Primary Inspection Kiosks and advanced internal captioning and video-phone systems.



4. Communication (Other than ICT)

Effective and inclusive communication strategies have markedly enhanced passenger interactions:

Inclusive Signage and Tactile Wayfinding (October 2024):

New terminal signage installations, including tactile and braille markers, significantly improved navigation for passengers who are blind or visually impaired.

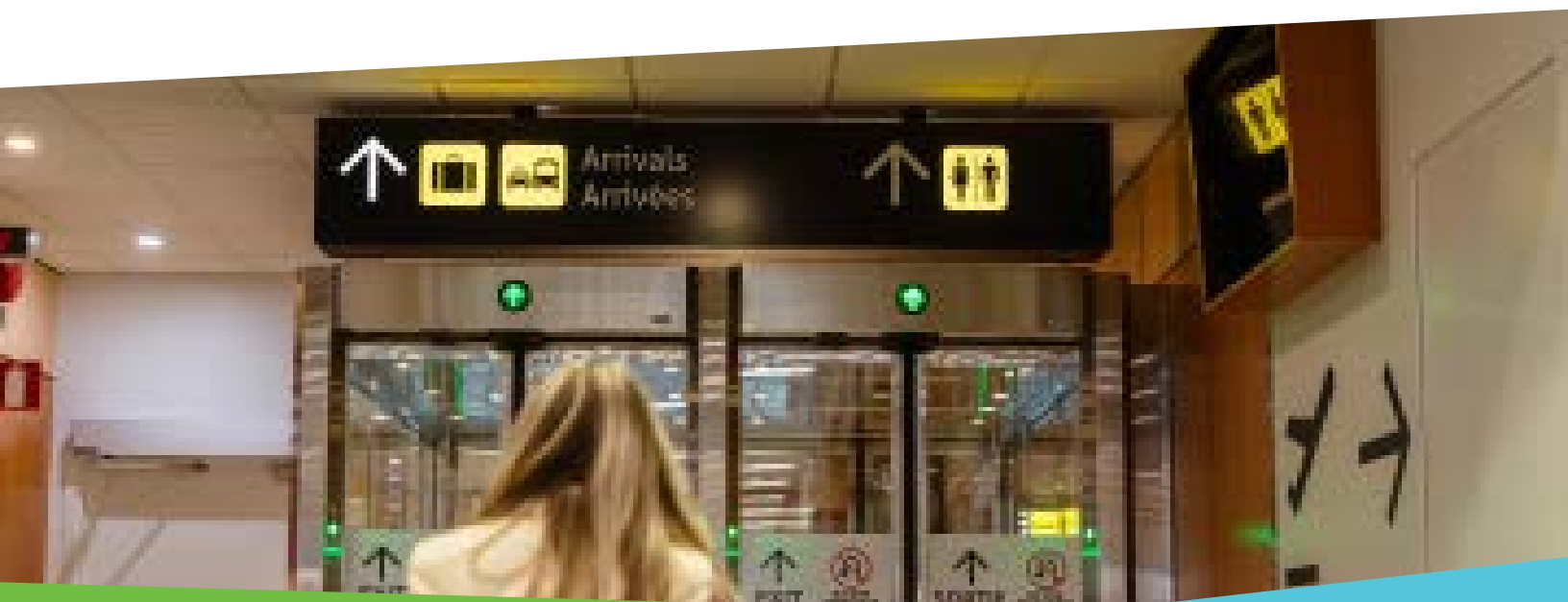
Accessibility Communication Training (December 2024):

Staff training sessions resulted in a measurable improvement (85% positive passenger feedback) in passenger-staff interactions.

And:

- Continuing to increase awareness of accessible airport programs and services within the community.
- Participated in the Town of Sidney Accessibility Expo as a booth exhibitor and panel speaker.
- Presented on accessibility services at YYJ to the Victoria Chamber of Commerce.
- Hosted familiarization visits for travelers and service animals.
- Developed a training schedule for service animals with BC and Alberta Guide Dogs.
- Integrated an Accessibility Moment into committee meetings and staff updates.

Future projects: creation of multilingual accessible communication toolkits and expanded social media accessibility (by mid-2026).



5. Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

Accessibility principles are now integral to VAA's procurement processes:

Vendor and concession agreements (Jan 2025):

As of January 2025, all vendor and concession agreements explicitly include mandatory compliance with VAA's detailed accessibility standards, actively maintaining a universally accessible environment across airport facilities. We explored ways to embed accessibility in procurement and created a score to track RFPs, purchases, and contracts aimed at a barrier-free airport.

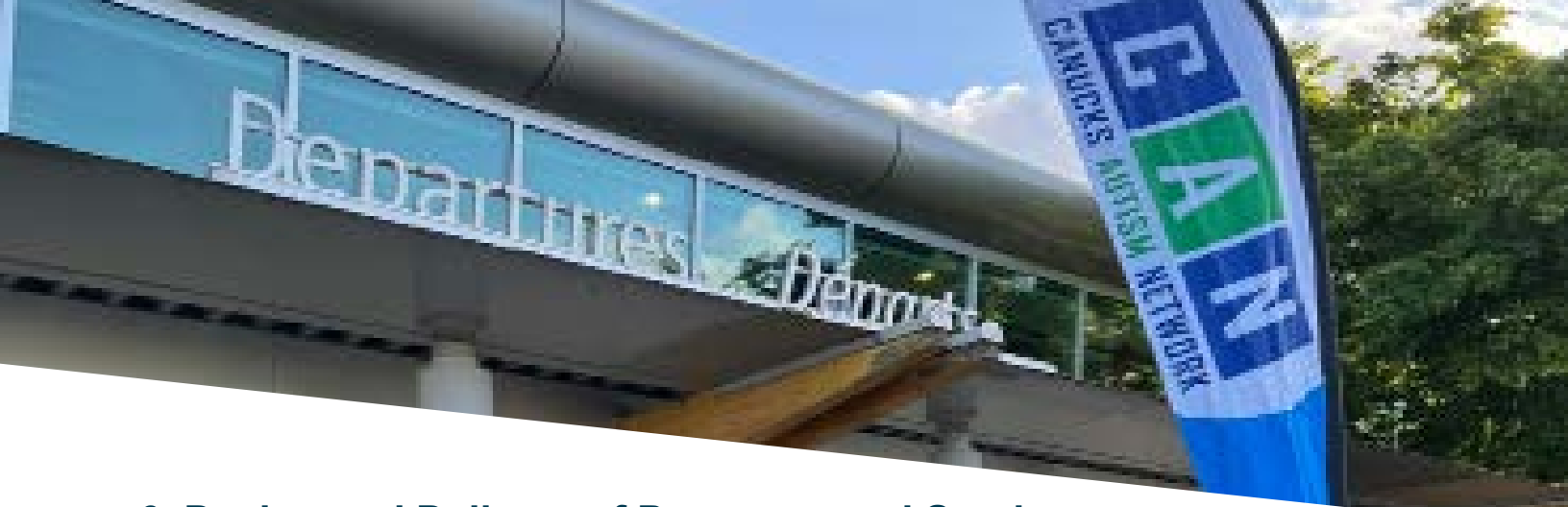
Added an accessibility review component to Project Initiation Documents.

And:

- Released the Parking Management Services Request For Proposal, including requirements for accessibility training and features for new equipment.

Future plans to develop comprehensive procurement scorecards that will track vendor accessibility compliance and effectiveness.





6. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

YYJ's strategic initiatives have tangibly improved passenger experiences:

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Program (Nov 2024):

Rapidly embraced by passengers, with a high number of users by March 2025, significantly reducing reported travel anxiety.

MagnusCards® App (Jan 2024):

Facilitates independent airport navigation for passengers with cognitive disabilities, with 90% of users reporting enhanced confidence levels.

YYJ Autism Aviation Day (annual from Apr 2023):

Successfully reduced anxiety associated with air travel among passengers with autism, validated by highly positive family and participant feedback surveys.

And:

- Implemented the common-use mobile Ground Load Passenger Boarding Ramp, which offers a significant advantage over aircraft stairs as it can accommodate passengers with various mobility aids and provide additional operational flexibility and ease for passengers.
- Enhanced our on-line Curbside Assistance Reservations which supports travellers who require extra assistance to and from their flights.
- Continue participation in Canadian Airports Council (CAC) Accessibility Working Group.
- Continuing to develop synergies between curbside assistance, air carrier personnel and the Customer Service Facilitator introduced by CATSA.

Future consideration in developing interaction between Age-Friendly Airport Toolkit and video-based American Sign Language services.

7. Transportation

Accessibility improvements in airport transport have notably increased passenger mobility:

Expanded Accessible Parking Shuttle Service (November 2024):

Regular parking shuttle use increased by 30%, reflecting improved accessibility and passenger independence during hi-peak seasonal times.

Ground Load Passenger Boarding Ramp (December 2024):

Passenger feedback confirms improved boarding experiences, especially for travelers using mobility aids, supporting greater dignity and ease of use.

And:

Future developments include a comprehensive accessibility parking study, and a dedicated Curbside management plan and program.



Compliance with CTA Accessibility Related Regulations

YYJ maintains exemplary compliance across all regulated accessibility requirements (ACA, ATPRR, ATPDR, Canada Transportation Act). Semi-annual internal audits consistently confirm strong adherence, with any minor issues promptly addressed within a 30-day resolution window.

Feedback Integration

VAA's enhanced feedback system (initiated January 2024) has directly influenced accessibility improvements.

YYJ received substantial feedback between June 2024 and March 2025, a majority of which directly informed service and facility improvements.

Integration of Consultations and Initiatives

VAA employed a multi-tiered consultation strategy to ensure that the posture to date reflects the lived realities of travelers, employees, and accessibility advocates. This framework, rooted in the principles of inclusive engagement and regulatory compliance, unfolded across four integrated phases.

Needs Identification

In order to get an accurate view of the progress of YYJ's Accessibility Program as well as maintaining a real-time understanding of the evolution of our initiatives and in preparation for this Progress Report, YYJ initiated a series of consultations to surface real and potential barriers experienced by persons with disabilities. On March 11, 14, and 18, 2025, VAA hosted three structured sessions facilitated by ProHara.

The Lived Experience Consultation on March 11 featured contributors who emphasized the importance of journey mapping and end-to-end passenger support. Participants noted the quality of YYJ's hands-on support at curbside and in-terminal services.

An employee consultation followed on March 14, bringing together YYJ team members and executives, including the CEO, operation leads, and frontline staff.

The highlights of the consultation consisted of concrete strategies to enhance accessibility in employment practices and workplace inclusion. Participants explored ways to improve the accessibility of recruitment and hiring processes, with the goal of increasing workforce diversity. Feedback supported the Canadian Airports Council (CAC) initiative, where YYJ collaborated with other airports to develop printable job aids and launch a national Accessibility Online Training program. The consultation also contributed to YYJ's involvement in future contributions to support shaping a shared Accessibility Road Map with CAC and peer airports.

Internally, participants recommended enhancing employee resources, which led to the addition of accessibility tools on the intranet and the delivery of two informative presentations. One notable operational outcome was the establishment of a non-passenger accessible screening portal to provide barrier-free access for employees and contracted service providers requiring secure entry.

The final Community Consultation on March 18 welcomed a cross-section of regional disability advocates, including representatives from the City of Victoria Accessibility Committee, Saanich Peninsula Advisory Committee, and BC Transit. Topics ranged from emergency planning and mobility aid protection to generational caregiving needs. A participant, paralyzed for over 40 years, highlighted the need for stress and barrier free experience.

Over 40 organizations were invited, spanning mental health, mobility, neurodivergence, low vision, seniors, and Indigenous communities. Confirmed partners included Disability Alliance BC, CNIB, Canucks Autism Network, Alzheimer Society of BC, and Indigenous Disability Canada.

The various and multiple hosted community consultations provided an accurate account of the progress made thus far, highlighting how well the airport is doing with its Accessibility Plan. The goal of the session was to share what YYJ has done over the past year to make the airport more accessible and to hear directly from the community about what's working and what still needs attention. The atmosphere of the meeting was open, respectful, and collaborative, with a real emphasis on listening and learning.

The meeting started with a welcome message, setting the tone for why this consultation matters not just because it's required by law, but because VAA truly wants the airport to work for everyone. Accessibility is a shared effort, with different organizations responsible for different parts of the travel experience. For example, YYJ looks after things like the building itself, parking, and curbside assistance, while airlines help passengers with mobility needs during boarding, and security is handled by CATSA, and further supported by the introduction of their Customer Service bilingual Facilitator program. This helped everyone understand who does what, and why teamwork is so important.

After the introductions, a presentation was given to explain the purpose of the Accessibility Progress Report, and what has been done since the plan was first published in June 2024, and what continuous improvement looks like in the future. The participants were meaningfully walked through real actions and examples like adding new accessibility features to the website, launching programs like MagnusCards® and the Sunflower Lanyard, and setting up more support for passengers at the curb and at check-in.

Throughout the session, the presenters didn't just talk at the participants they invited people to reflect, respond, and ask questions. There were pauses built into the session where the facilitators stopped to say: "What do you think about this?" or "Have we missed anything?" These weren't just polite questions. The organizers were genuinely interested in hearing from people with lived experience of disability, family members, and advocates.

Participants were engaged and shared thoughtful feedback. Some spoke about how helpful the Curbside Assistance Program is, while others offered suggestions to make services even more seamless. There was appreciation for the improvements already made, like autism-friendly events and better signage. At the same time, people pointed out areas where more could be done like making sure information is available in formats that work for all, and improving parking for persons with reduced mobility.





The tone of the conversation was encouraging. People felt heard, and the VAA team took notes, asked follow-up questions, and thanked participants for their honesty. There was a sense that the airport is making real progress but also that there is more to learn, especially when it comes to the real-life experiences of travelers with disabilities.

The session wrapped up by asking a few key questions:

- How are we doing so far?
- What else can we do to improve the airport experience for people with disabilities?
- What is one thing we could change to become a truly accessible airport?

The team closed by reminding everyone that the feedback they gave would directly shape this Accessibility Progress Report, which will be published by June 1, 2025. They also emphasized that this wasn't the end of the conversation. Instead, it was part of an ongoing relationship between the airport and the people who use it especially those who face barriers that others may not even notice.

In the end, this consultation wasn't just about fulfilling a requirement. It was about making space for real dialogue, learning from people with lived experience, and making sure that the airport becomes more accessible, welcoming, and inclusive for all.

Each consultation directly informed the development of YYJ’s commitments across the seven focus areas. The Accessibility Working Group, composed of cross-departmental VAA staff and informed by ProHara’s insights, convened bi-weekly to incorporate this feedback.

YYJ maintained a high level of transparency throughout the execution phase. Participants from the April sessions were re-engaged via email to validate proposed changes, and their feedback shaped specific implementation features for example, adding a printable parking guide with accessible stall information, adjusting kiosk screens for low vision compatibility, and updating taxi imagery to reflect wheelchair-accessible vans.

Quarterly internal updates and upcoming journey mapping sessions now incorporating disability-based passenger personas further demonstrate YYJ’s commitment to accountability.

Consultation participants from Canucks Autism Network and BC Transit offered continued insight into how new procedures could better support neurodivergent travelers and passengers who use mobility aids.

A culture of adaptive improvement was modeled in real-time. VAA is committed to exploring navigational technologies such as Good Maps TM for persons with communication barriers and expanding partner training to ensure passengers feel “safe and secure wearing Sunflower lanyards,” especially in security areas.

These actions reinforce YYJ’s commitment to inclusive design and continuous responsiveness, ensuring persons with disabilities are not only consulted but empowered as co-creators in their travel experience.



Outcomes and Benefits

Collectively, these initiatives deliver meaningful outcomes for passengers and staff:

- Substantial increases in passenger independence and satisfaction.
- Significant reductions in travel anxiety.
- Improved staff responsiveness, engagement, and satisfaction in handling accessibility.
- Enhanced community ties through increased stakeholder involvement and satisfaction.



FINAL THOUGHTS

Victoria Airport Authority's detailed and comprehensive approach has achieved significant accessibility advancements, substantially exceeding regulatory requirements and industry standards. This Progress Report demonstrates VAA's ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive, welcoming, and barrier-free airport experience for all travelers and employees.

At Victoria International Airport, we believe accessibility is not just a destination. It's a commitment we renew every day, in our decisions, and in our interactions. As we reflect on the progress made over the past year, we also acknowledge how much of that progress has been shaped by the voices, experiences, and honest feedback of the people who use our airport and work within it. This Accessibility Progress Report is more than a list of achievements: it's a reflection of how we're growing alongside our community, guided by the principle of "Nothing Without Us."

This year's consultations reminded us that true accessibility is built through listening, learning, and collaboration. Whether we were hearing from a parent traveling with a child on the autism spectrum, a person using a wheelchair who relies on timely curbside support, or an employee reflecting on the need for clearer workplace accommodations, every story added depth to our understanding. These conversations helped turn good ideas into better solutions. They led to real changes like refreshing our website with more accessible navigation, launching nationally recognized tools like MagnusCards® and the Sunflower Lanyard, and creating new staff training programs rooted in empathy and inclusion.

We also recognize that accessibility is a shared responsibility. It takes all of us airport operators, partners, staff, airlines, service providers, and passengers to build an environment where everyone feels welcome, safe, and supported. Our ongoing work with the Canadian Airports Council, CATSA, CBSA, and community organizations ensures that we continue moving forward together, not just as an airport, but as part of a national movement toward a barrier-free Canada.

We know there is still more to do. The built environment will keep evolving with universal design in mind. Communication tools will continue to expand to meet the diverse needs of travelers. And our commitment to inclusive employment, accessible technology, and continuous consultation will remain strong.

We encourage everyone; passengers, employees, caregivers, advocates to stay engaged with us. If you experience a barrier, have feedback, or want this report in an alternate format, please reach out. You may choose to share your name or remain anonymous. Either way, we will acknowledge your feedback and respond promptly whenever possible. Your insights help us improve, and your experiences help us better understand what inclusion means in real terms.

As we look ahead, we do so with clarity and resolve. Accessibility is not a program. It is part of who we are in becoming an airport that puts people first, that designs with dignity, and that remains committed to creating a travel experience that is not only easier to navigate, but also better for everybody.

Thank you for being part of this journey.





201-1640 Electra Blvd Sidney,
BC V8L 5V4
P 250-953-7500
yyj.ca