

Kelowna International Airport Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process

2024-2027



Our commitment

The Kelowna International Airport (YLW) has a long history and has proudly served the Okanagan since 1946. We take pride in welcoming millions of passengers annually to British Columbia and by delivering safe, secure, and efficient services and facilities for our community.

YLW is committed to a passenger experience that is accessible, inclusive, and dignified. Accessible transportation is a strategic priority for YLW and we are committed to ensuring all passengers can enjoy air travel equally and without barriers.

This is YLW's first Accessibility Plan and it marks an important step in our commitment to delivering the best possible experience for all passengers. As part of this process, we engaged InterVISTAS Consulting, a leader in aviation, tourism, and access. Together, we have created a Plan that identifies barriers and ways to remove them over a three-year period. It represents a starting point from which to advance our journey to becoming a more barrier-free airport for passengers with disabilities.

Sam Samaddar

Sam Samaddar, AAE, HonBA
Airport Chief Executive Officer

Who we are

Kelowna International Airport (YLW) is the largest municipally-owned airport in Canada and has been operated by the City of Kelowna (City) since 1946. This is a unique structure that is unlike how other airports in Canada are governed. The Airport Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is an officer of the City and has overall responsibility for airport management and operations. While YLW maintains a close connection to the City as a municipally-owned airport, YLW retains independence and autonomy as an airport operator. As a key part of the city of Kelowna and the Okanagan region, it is important that our products, services, and facilities reflect the diversity of the community in which we are located and serve.

General

A. Designated person

To submit feedback or request alternative formats for these documents, please contact the designated person below:

Jeff Monk

Airport Groundside and Terminal Manager

Kelowna International Airport

Tel: +1-250-807-4325

Email: jmonk@kelowna.ca

B. Feedback process

In addition to Jeff Monk, Airport Groundside and Terminal Manager, individuals can also contact YLW via our website, social media, toll-free number, email, mail or in-person at YLW's terminal facilities.

Website: <https://ylw.kelowna.ca/passengers>

Email: airport@kelowna.ca

Telephone: +1-250-807-4300

TTY Relay Service:

Dial 711

After the operator confirmation, type in +1-250-807-4300

The operator will dial the number for you and act as interpreter.

Fax: +1-250-765-0213

Mailing address:

Kelowna International Airport

1 – 5533 Airport Way

Kelowna, BC

V1V 1S1

Feedback may be provided anonymously by any and all of the previous methods of communication. We will acknowledge that we received feedback and will respond to it in the format in which we received it.

C. Alternative formats

YLW will provide materials in alternative formats upon request. For braille or audio formats, YLW will provide information in 45 days. For large print, physical copies, or a format that is compatible with adaptive technology, YLW will provide documentation in 15 days.

Our understanding of barriers to accessible transportation

YLW is committed to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessible transportation in everything we do. This includes the products, services, and facilities we offer both passengers and staff. It is important that we define what a barrier is.

We categorize barriers into five (5) categories. These categories are:



Attitudinal barriers

These barriers result when people think or act based on false assumptions.



Systemic barriers

These barriers include policies, procedures, or work instructions that result in some people being excluded from activities, employment, or other services.



Technological barriers

These barriers occur when technology, such as a smartphone application, cannot be accessed by people with disabilities.



Information and communication barriers

These barriers are created when information is offered in a format that suits some of the population, but not all people.



Physical/architectural barriers

These are physical obstacles that prevent access to a facility, room, or other location.

Employment

YLW employs approximately 55 staff at the airport. Our staff work in a number of different capacities, ranging from front-line employees to managers. We strive to create a workplace that is inclusive, safe, and barrier free.

In 2022, the City of Kelowna engaged a third-party consultant to conduct a comprehensive *HR Policies and Practices Audit*. This audit sought to outline the foundation on which a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategy would build. The final report and recommendations have been reviewed by the city, as well as the recommendations for improvement.



To ensure that YLW maintains a safe, empowering, and inclusive workplace environment, we have developed and continuously review our policies. Some of these policies include the following:

- No Discrimination, Harassment or Bullying Policy
- City of Kelowna Principles of Conduct (Guide for City of Kelowna Staff and contracted staff)
- Accommodation Policy
- Alternate Work Schedule Policy

Barriers Identified

Systemic and attitudinal barriers to accessible employment were identified during a review of employment and recruitment practices.

- In job adverts, there is no mention of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) principles or guidance on the provision of accommodations during the recruitment process.
- There is no invitation to request alternative formats of job adverts or alternative methods to submit job applications included in employment opportunity postings, representing a systemic barrier to accessibility.

Actions and Timelines

- In 2024, YLW will include the opportunity to request alternative formats of job adverts, such as in plain language, large text, or paper form if posted online, as well as submit applications through alternative means of communication.
- With a commitment to a barrier-free workplace, YLW will ensure job postings include information regarding the provision of accommodations during the job recruitment process in 2025.
- By the end of 2025, YLW will revise our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles and ensure that accessibility is included within this framework to create DEIA principles to be included in recruitment practices.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

YLW believes that technology can enable seamless travel for all passengers. However, it can also present barriers to passengers with disabilities when implemented without consideration of universal design principles. In our increasingly mobile world, YLW's website has become more important for passengers seeking information about our services and programs. Our accessibility webpage provides detailed information about the services and facilities available to support passengers with disabilities.

Additionally, we provide flight information display systems (FIDS), telephone relay services, and public address (PA) system announcements. Our goal is to provide digital information in a way that is compatible with various adaptive technologies and devices.

Barriers Identified

Information and communication as well as technological barriers were identified during an on-site assessment at the YLW airport and during a review of the airport website.

- Documents available on the YLW website are not always compatible or fully accessible with assistive technology like screen readers.
- The website does not currently offer a widget to adjust contrast, brightness, or other accessible functions easily.
- ReadySTATION self-service kiosk does not have audio output or other accessibility-related functionality.

Actions and Timelines

- In 2025-2026, YLW will revise our external website to ensure that it meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements, which will be audited by specialists to ensure that it meets *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA*.
- By the end of 2025, YLW will review our website as well as internal and external documentation made available in an electronic format to ensure that they are accessible for people using adaptive/assistive technology.
- In 2025, YLW will introduce the option to adjust text font size and contrast on our website.
- In 2024, contact vendor for ReadySTATION to inquire about the ability to improve accessibility-related functionality.

Communication, other than ICT

Passengers rely on clear communication at all times. It is fundamental to smooth operations and delivering an enjoyable passenger experience. YLW prides itself on delivering communication that is barrier-free and in a way that takes into account the types of barriers that passengers with disabilities may encounter during their travel. As a result, YLW has incorporated communication methods as part of the accessibility training provided to all staff who interact with the public.

Communication other than ICT means how YLW communicates information without using technology. We communicate using signage across the airport, as well as through airport-wide public address (PA) systems. In each case, information about our services can be provided in non-ICT format in an easily digestible way.

For the actions and timelines outlined below, signage is defined as information provided in the form of visual and tactile communication that incorporate visual elements such as alphanumeric symbols, pictograms, illustrations, or braille. Wayfinding describes a system whereby



appropriate information is provided to assist a person to pass through the built environment towards a specific destination.

Barriers Identified

Information and communication barriers were identified during an on-site assessment of the airport and means of communication.

- Inconsistency in language and use of icons and symbols in the terminal facilities. For example, this includes not always using international standard symbols such as ISO 7001 published by the International Organization for Standardization.
- Limited wayfinding to the pre- and post-security Service Animal Relief Area (SARA).
- Braille and tactile signage are not applied to some signs and locators within reach-height.

Actions and Timelines

- In 2024, YLW will evaluate our flight information display screens, including font size and maximum viewing distance to comply with CSA/ASC B651:23 standards.
- In 2025, YLW will introduce additional wayfinding solutions to the Service Animal Relief Area (SARA) locations pre- and post-security. These solutions will be developed in consultation with people with disabilities.
- In 2025, YLW will eliminate any language discrepancies between our website and terminal facilities.
- In 2026, YLW will assess the feasibility of creating a plan to increase consistency in the signage and wayfinding system.
- By the end of 2026, YLW will review its use of icons and symbols in signage to ensure consistency and compliance with international standards (such as those in ISO 7001).

Procurement of goods, services, and facilities

We recognize that one of the most important ways an airport can prevent a barrier from being introduced into our environment is through accessible procurement. YLW works with a variety of contractors and suppliers who provide services, goods, and facilities at our airport.

While we currently do not have an accessible procurement policy, YLW is committed to creating one in collaboration with the City of Kelowna to ensure that all our contracts, requests for

proposals (RFPs), and other procurement-related documentation include an emphasis on preventing the introduction of barriers in the future.

Barriers Identified

Systemic and attitudinal barriers were identified during a review of procurement practices.

- There is no accessible procurement policy, technical requirements, or guidance established to be included in tender packages.
- Awareness of efforts to adopt accessible procurement practices is inconsistent.
- The airport shares procurement resources with the City of Kelowna and may not be familiar with federally-regulated facilities and services.

Actions and Timelines

- By the end of 2025, YLW will create and incorporate an accessible procurement policy in collaboration with the City of Kelowna. The policy will outline our commitment to prevent the introduction of barriers in the airport environment as well as guidance to append to tender documentation.
- In 2025, YLW will increase internal awareness of accessible procurement practices and efforts to integrate accessibility into tender evaluation framework.

Design and delivery of services and programs

YLW incorporates accessibility into all its terminal services and programs. It outlines steps to provide an exceptional experience for passengers with disabilities in its directives, which focus on assistance for persons with disabilities, training, awareness, as well as airport stanchion layouts.

The training that all passenger-facing staff undergo covers all elements of the passenger journey, including the



transportation of mobility aids, curbside assistance, and the variety of barriers that an individual with a disability may face while travelling through YLW.

Barriers Identified

Attitudinal barriers were identified during a review of the design and delivery of services and programs.

- Awareness surrounding the accessible services available at YLW can be increased.
- Persons with lived experience are not always consulted during the design of programs, services, and products.

Actions and Timelines

- In 2024, YLW will introduce a new training course entitled “Canadian Airports Accessibility Training” which was developed by the Canadian Airports Council (CAC) with consultation of people with disabilities across Canada.
- In 2024, YLW will participate on the City’s accessibility advisory committee to ensure that perspectives and feedback from people with lived experience can be reflected in airport services.
- By the end of 2025, YLW will launch a campaign intended to increase awareness of the accessible services available at our airport among passengers and employees.

Transportation

Transportation is at the heart of our business at YLW. We take great pride in safely and securely moving thousands of passengers and baggage every day. As part of our commitment to deliver a barrier-free passenger experience, YLW offers curbside assistance for both departing and arriving passengers. While we have designated curbside zones, passengers and staff can either pre-arrange curbside assistance or make the request when they arrive at the designated location.

Additionally, YLW works closely with all our rental car companies and ground transportation service providers to ensure each offers accessible vehicles and services to passengers.

Barriers Identified

Physical and technological barriers were identified during a review of transportation.

- Parking paystations (self-service devices) do not support audio output.
- Pedestrian crossing indicator inoperable from arrivals level to outer curb.
- Rental car area has various elevation changes to access service attendant facility.

Actions and Timelines

- In 2025, YLW will explore opportunities to modify pay parking machine features to be more accessible.
- By the end of 2025, YLW will review all commercial agreements with ground transportation services to ensure accessibility-related services are included.
- In 2026, YLW will explore the opportunity to add accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

Built environment

YLW strives to provide facilities that are comfortable and convenient for all passengers. The built environment refers to the physical spaces of the terminal facilities, including parking lots. Both passengers and staff use these spaces on a daily basis and it is important that YLW continues to monitor the built environment for any barriers to equal access.

We currently offer a variety of barrier-free spaces, ranging from universal toilets to accessible common-use self-service kiosks. Additionally, YLW provides two service animal relief areas (SARAs). One is located on the public-side before security and the other is located after security, so that passengers with service animals can access these spaces without needing to leave the secure area of the terminal.

Barriers Identified

During an on-site assessment of the YLW airport, physical and attitudinal barriers were identified.

- Garbage bins are positioned in the middle of the path of access between the outer curb and short-term parking (pedestrian crossings).

- Lack of high contrast line to mark transition of surfaces on ramp from airside to terminal.
- Various elevation changes and slopes on the arrival and transfers level of the terminal facilities as well as the rental car area.

Actions and Timelines

- In 2024, YLW will incorporate considerations for accessibility including features such as curb ramps and evaluate access paths as we undergo construction.
- In 2024, YLW will adjust the storage of operational assets such as garbage bins to remove barriers to paths of access.
- In 2025, YLW will evaluate the elevation changes and slopes to ensure accessibility.
- By the end of 2025, YLW will introduce high contrast markings to indicate the transition of surfaces from airside ramps.

Provisions of CTA accessibility-related regulations

YLW is subject to the Canadian Transportation Agency's *Accessible Transportation for Persons with Disabilities Regulations* (ATPDR) and the provisions of these regulations that apply to it. In particular, YLW is subject to "Part 1—Requirements Applicable to Transportation Service Providers" and "Part 4— Requirements Applicable to Terminal Operators.

Additionally, YLW provides all passenger-facing staff with appropriate training to support a barrier-free

passenger experience at facilities across our network. We are subject to the *Accessible Transportation Planning and Reporting Regulations* (ATPRR), which outlines how YLW plans on delivering on commitments to improving the passenger experience for people with disabilities.



Provisions of federal employer-related regulations

As a federally-regulated employer, YLW is subject to the *Accessible Canada Regulations* (ACRs). We strive to create a workplace that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

Consultation

YLW recognizes the importance of consulting people with lived experience, support persons, and carers.

We have shared either parts or earlier versions of this Plan with a number of disability advocacy groups in British Columbia and elsewhere in Canada. Pacific Autism Family Network (PAFN) has reviewed earlier versions of this plan and has provided feedback on barriers that people with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities may face along the travel journey. Comments acknowledged that the Plan identifies attitudinal barriers at the airport which can be eliminated through effective training and awareness. There were calls to include a clear path for addressing attitudinal barriers including a stronger emphasis on staff and volunteer training, beyond mobility-related disabilities to include invisible disabilities and the needs of the neurodiverse community. The “Design and Delivery of Services and Programs” section of the Plan includes a description of training, and feedback from PAFN informed points under the sub-heading “Actions and Timelines” as well.

PAFN also highlighted the importance of pre-planning tools, specifically websites, to ensure that people with disabilities and caregivers can plan in advance and understand what to expect at YLW prior to arriving at the airport for travel.

We have also consulted members of the community who are deaf and will work to incorporate their feedback into our action plan. We heard feedback that emphasized the importance of accessibility training including strategies for communication with people of all abilities. Feedback also highlighted the importance of providing information in alternative and accessible formats, particular at key parts of the passenger process like security screening, on websites, and in departure lounges.

As a key partner in our travel ecosystem, we have also solicited feedback from Air Canada. We recognize that close collaboration with our airline partners is essential to support a barrier-free travel experience at YLW. Feedback highlighted that it is important not only commit to a barrier-free travel experience for passengers but also to employees at the airport. This engagement also emphasized the importance of consistency in how an airport works alongside national airlines to identify barriers common across the ecosystem.

The “Employment” section of the Plan highlights YLW’s commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) principles during the recruitment process, including job adverts to address systemic and attitudinal barriers. In the Plan, we incorporated a commitment to revise recruitment processes to ensure they are barrier-free and highlight a commitment to accessibility within the framework of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles to be inclusive of all people.

The consultations of PAFN, Air Canada and Jazz Aviation, and members of the deaf community took place during May 2024. The manner in which consultations took place included virtual engagements by email. The individuals and groups consulted were asked for their willingness to review and provide feedback on the YLW Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process 2024-2027. Written feedback was provided on drafts of this document and shared via email. YLW will continue to incorporate the findings into the Plan.

We acknowledge the importance of their feedback and continually look for ways to remove barriers in all the services, products, and facilities we provide.

We are planning additional engagement opportunities with our community. This will include engagement using digital platforms, such as the City of Kelowna’s Get Involved Kelowna platform, <https://getinvolved.kelowna.ca/>, and stakeholder meetings.

YLW plans to do further engagement on the Accessibility Plan with the community and key stakeholders.