

# Measuring Up: Built Environment Self-Assessment Guidelines



## .... How does your community Measure Up?

Creating an accessible and inclusive built environment is an important initial step for a community to take towards enabling and welcoming participation from all citizens, regardless of ability.

This means ensuring that all the human-made spaces or structures in a community, such as buildings, sidewalks, trails, and parks, are designed and built in such a way that anyone can use them. This type of design is known as Universal Design, which ensures that human-made structures are usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation.

The seven main principles of Universal Design are:

- 1) Equality**  
The built environment is useful to people with diverse abilities
- 2) Flexibility**  
The built environment accommodates a wide range of abilities
- 3) Simplicity**  
The built environment is easy to navigate and understand
- 4) Perceptible Information**  
The built environment, and the design of the elements within it, communicates necessary information effectively regardless of a person's sensory abilities or any background conditions, using a number of different modes (e.g. pictures, verbal, tactile, technological, etc.)
- 5) Tolerance**  
The built environment minimizes hazards and safety concerns
- 6) Low Physical Effort**  
The built environment can be used easily with minimal effort
- 7) Appropriate Size and Space**  
The built environment is sized to accommodate everyone's approach, reach, manipulation and use, regardless of body size, posture or mobility

Creating an accessible and inclusive built environment in your community can be a lengthy and involved process. A good first step is to work with your community to determine which public buildings or places (e.g. municipal hall, community centre, recreation centre, hospital, town square, etc.) are most important for community use. This can be done by hosting a public community form, developing focus groups, or by facilitating public workshops. This process will help you choose a place to start. Even small changes, such as installing an automatic door, developing signage, renovating a washroom or installing curb-cuts can make a huge difference.

These Built Environment Self-Assessment Guidelines were developed to support communities to measure and self-assess the accessibility and inclusion of their built environment, in order to recognize and celebrate what is done well and to identify what needs improvement. You may need to adapt or expand these guidelines to fit the needs of your community.

### Using the Guidelines:

- 1) Choose one or two members of your Measuring Up Committee to coordinate assessing your community's built environment. Decide as a committee on a deadline for completion.
- 2) Consider hiring a consultant, or allocating staff time, to complete the assessment. Depending upon the size of your community and the level of detail you wish to gather, it can be an in-depth and time-consuming process. It may be helpful to start your assessment by examining your municipal hall as well as other important public buildings and places.
- 3) Compile and review the results of the assessment.
- 4) For public buildings and places that are already accessible and inclusive in your community, think about ways in which you can celebrate and recognize what is already in place. Advertise these successes within the community and spread the good news.

You may also want to consider submitting a best practice story or example to 2010 Legacies Now's Measuring Up team at [measuringup@2010LegaciesNow.com](mailto:measuringup@2010LegaciesNow.com).

- 5) For buildings and places that are currently being built, or that are scheduled for renovation in the next several years, discuss with your committee and

the appropriate municipal departments how Universal Design principles can be incorporated into the design and/or building process to make sure that accessibility and inclusion issues are addressed.

- 6) For buildings and places that are not currently accessible and inclusive, work with your Committee to:
  - a. Research how the building or space can be made accessible in the most cost-effective and efficient way. Talk to the relevant departments within your municipality, speak to neighbouring municipalities, consult disability organizations in your community, and reference existing building and design standards such as:
    - Access Guide Canada
    - B.C. Building Access Handbook
    - Canadian Standards, Accessible Design for the Built Environment
  - b. Develop implementation plans for these upgrades, including the identification of actions steps, assignment of staff (or volunteers), timelines and resources needed.
  - c. Contact 2010 Legacies Now's Measuring Up team for additional support, information and assistance.

It may be difficult to work on all of your implementation plans at once. With your committee, pick the ones that are the most important to your community and act on these items first. You can then incorporate any other target strategies into future municipal plans.

These guidelines were developed based on:

Canadian Standards  
Accessible Design for the Built Environment, 2004.

Access Canada  
Property Standards Manual, 2007.

2010 Legacies Now, Accessible Tourism Strategy  
Non-Accommodation Checklist, 2008.

**Built Environment Self-Assessment Guidelines:**

Parking	Yes	In Progress	No
1 out of every 100 spaces should be a designated accessible parking space.			
Accessible parking spaces should be a minimum of 3.9m (3900mm) wide and on a hard level surface.			

Path to Main Entrance and to Services and Amenities	Yes	In Progress	No
Paths should be at least 0.92m (920mm) wide along the majority of the pathway, with some allowance for short 0.8m (810 mm) sections, on a hard surface free of barriers, such as steps, stairs or obstructions, over 0.013m (13mm) high.			
Retail business aisles should be a minimum of 1.1m (1100mm) wide, and free of obstructions.			
The slope of the path should be no greater than 8.3% (rise of 1 for run of 12).			
If there are spots where turning is necessary, or in high traffic areas, the pathway should be at least 1.5m X 1.5m (1500mm X 1500mm).			
Any safety hazards or obstructions that are not removable should be protected and marked appropriately.			
Any signage should be clearly marked, with large 18 to 24 point font or symbols with high contrast between text/symbol and background (dark/light).			
Tactile signage and/or visual and auditory signals (e.g. flashing lights at an important crosswalk, chirping cross signals etc.) should also be present where appropriate.			

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Main Entrance	Yes	In Progress	No
One entrance, preferably the entrance that everyone uses, should be a minimum of 0.81m (810mm) wide with no thresholds over 0.013m (13mm).			
There should be a level area of at least 1.5m X 1.5m (1500mm X 1500mm) long in front of the entrance, including at either end of any slope.			
The door should be easy to open for someone with limited strength or hand function. A door that is easy to open is either an automatic door or one that has a pull handle (not a knob or thumb latch) which does not require a great deal of power or hand agility to open.			

Safety Practices	Yes	In Progress	No
Any alarms (fire, etc.) should include a flashing component.			
There should be a minimum of one accessible emergency exit for every public building.			
Key staff should be familiar with the accessible emergency exit and should be ready to assist persons with disabilities in an emergency.			

Fitting rooms, Seating and Table Areas	Yes	In Progress	No
If seating is provided, space should be left so that persons using wheelchairs, scooters or other devices can use the area and traffic flows through the area are not affected.			
Depending upon the size of the seating area, some seats should be reserved for older persons, persons with disabilities and families with young children.			
If seating is provided, there should be a variety of seats with armrests and without armrests and without armrests.			
If seating is provided with tables, there should be some designated accessible tables that are a minimum of 0.73m (730mm) high (with at least 0.68m (680mm) of knee clearance), 0.75m (750mm) wide and 0.48m (480mm) deep.			
Fitting rooms, if provided, should have a door that is a minimum of 0.76 (760mm) wide, with no thresholds over 0.013m (13mm).			
Fitting rooms, if provided, should have a minimum of 1.5m X 1.5m (1500mm X1500mm) clear space inside the room with a least one grab bar available.			
If multiple fitting rooms are provided at least one stall should be accessible. If only one fitting room is provided it should be accessible.			

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Elevators	Yes	In Progress	No
<p>If elevators are needed they should have a minimum of 1.725m X 1.37m (1725mm X 1370 mm) of clear floor space with handrails on all walls of the elevator, except the door. Handrails should be between 0.8m (800mm) and 0.92m (920mm) above the ground, with a space of between 0.035m (35mm) to 0.045m (45mm) between the handrail and the elevator wall.</p>			
<p>The door of the elevator should be a minimum of 0.81m (810mm) wide, with no thresholds over 0.013m (13mm).</p>			
<p>Signage at and in the elevator should be clearly marked, with large 18 to 24 point font or symbols with high contrast between text/ symbol and background (dark/light).</p>			
<p>There should be clear, adequate signage throughout the building directing users to the elevator.</p>			
<p>Elevator signage should also include Braille on any internal and external call buttons.</p>			
<p>Elevator doors should open automatically when obstructed.</p>			
<p>Elevator call buttons should be between 0.89m (890mm) and 1.22m (1220mm) above the ground.</p>			
<p>Floor arrivals should be signaled audibly.</p>			

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Public Washrooms	Yes	In Progress	No
There should be a minimum of one accessible washroom and/or stall in every public building (e.g. municipal hall, community centre, recreation centre, etc.)			
The main doors to the washroom should be a minimum of 0.81m (810mm) wide with no thresholds over 0.013m (13mm).			
Accessible washroom stall doors should be a minimum of 0.76m (760mm) wide, with no thresholds over 0.013m (13mm).			
Doors to the washroom and/or to the stalls should be easy to open and lock. A door is easy to lock if it is automatic, has a pull handle (not a knob) and does not require a great deal of power or hand agility to use.			
Inside the washroom and/or inside the accessible stall, there should be at least 1.5m X 1.5m (1500mm X 1500mm) of space available, with 0.9m (900mm) clear space beside the toilet and 0.76m (760mm) clear space in front of the toilet.			
The toilet should be a minimum of 0.43m to 0.485m (430mm to 485mm) high to the top of the seat, with at least one grab bar on the closest side wall.			
Sinks should have a minimum of 0.68m (680mm) knee clearance underneath the sink, and be at least 0.75m (750mm) wide and 0.48m (480mm) deep.			
Sink faucets should be easy to operate for someone with limited strength or hand function. A faucet is easy to use if it is automatic, has a pull handle (not a knob) and does not require a great deal of power or hand agility to use.			
Washrooms offered to the public should be clearly marked, with large 18 to 24 point font or symbols with high contrast between text/symbol and background (dark/light).			
Washroom signage should also include Braille.			