

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE



For Immediate Release

June 27, 2023

City Commits to Achieving Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certified™ (RHFAC) Gold

The City of Williams Lake, in partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation, is furthering its commitment to making Williams Lake more accessible through a series of targeted goals.

During its Tuesday, June 20 Regular Meeting, City of Williams Lake Council approved a framework for City accessibility standards moving forward as a community, including setting the following goals:

- Implementing the steps necessary for all new future City-owned buildings to be designed and built to meet RHFAC Gold;
- Ensuring all future major renovations of existing City-owned buildings will meet Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification;
- Training and designating one or more City staff to be an RHFAC Professional, to support the RHFAC process in City-owned buildings; and
- Encouraging the building design, construction and development community in Williams Lake to adopt RHFAC as other new buildings and renovations are contemplated.

The goals will be included in the City's forthcoming Accessibility Plan, which is required to be in place by September of 2023. The plan will provide a framework of goals and priorities to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

"Congratulations to the City of Williams Lake, Mayor and Council for being the third municipality in Canada to commit to all future City-owned buildings to be designed and built to meet RHFAC Gold," Hansen said.

"Following my Tour, the City of Williams Lake put up a sculpture of a large empty wheelchair as an ongoing symbol of my dream of finding a cure for paralysis and to making the world more accessible. It's extra meaningful to me today that my hometown of Williams Lake is reinforcing their promise of making the city a model for accessibility.

"We have come a long way, and there is still more work to be done. By committing to meaningful accessibility for all, together we will achieve the dream."

The City and Rick Hansen Foundation are also thrilled to invite the entire community to celebrate the official grand opening of a new Rick Hansen Man in Motion Exhibition at the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin on Thursday, June 29 from 3:30 to 6 pm.

The exhibition opening will feature a special announcement from Rick Hansen and the City of Williams Lake, plus live performances from the Williams Lake Youth Fiddlers and Williams Lake's own world-famous, award-winning fingerstyle guitarist, Don Alder. A special presentation to Hansen and Alder is also planned, and cake and refreshments will be served.

Hansen, who grew up in Williams Lake, will be visiting the city as this year's honorary parade marshal for the 95th Annual Williams Lake Stampede taking place from June 29 to July 2. The Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin's Man in Motion Exhibition will feature a collection celebrating Hansen's 1985-87 historical journey around the world promoting spinal cord injury research and awareness about the potential of people with disabilities.

"The City of Williams Lake is dedicated to working closely with Rick Hansen and the Rick Hansen Foundation to help make our community accessible for people of all abilities," said Mayor Surinderpal Rathor. "We have been working with RHF over the past several years to help ensure City-owned buildings are accessible, and are looking forward to continuing to make strong strides toward achieving Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification. As the hometown of Rick Hansen, the City is honoured to help carry on the groundbreaking work that Rick started during his Man in Motion World Tour, with a goal of providing accessible, inclusive spaces for residents and visitors to Williams Lake."

To learn more about RHF Accessibility Certification visit www.RickHansen.com/RHFAC

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