



Access Oceanside Association

Annual Report 2024

2024 was a landmark year for Access Oceanside Association (AOA), involving both routine and special activities, which I will detail in a moment. However, I must start with our most important achievement - finally securing beach accessibility. This would not have been possible without the *tireless* work of Ralph Tietjen!

Parksville Beach Accessibility:

- Conducted research into beach accessibility elsewhere on Vancouver Island.
- Researched sources and costs of accessibility equipment.
- Received an offer from Labatt Corona Canada to donate beach accessibility equipment.
- Extensive negotiations with Labatt Corona and their representatives.
- Several presentations to Parksville Mayor and Council.
- Several meetings with Graham Gidden, Parks Manager, re installation.
- Liaised with City of Parksville, Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association, and The Beach Club Resort.
- Finally installed in July 2025!
- Monitored usage and maintenance needs.
- Donated beach wheelchairs to Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association, with The Beach Club Resort storing them during the season and handling free “rentals”.
- Donated mats to City of Parksville, now a permanent (seasonal) service maintained by the City of Parksville.

On-Going Activities:

- Contacting City of Parksville regarding shared usage signage and accessibility issues for the deteriorating boardwalk in the Community Park
- Letters of Support for worthy projects, such as the Qualicum Beach Waterfront Viewing area
- On-going liaison with UAQB and Oceanside Integrated Fitness Society (formerly Brain Body Fitness for All)
- Responding to inquiries, such as questions about AOA, beach access, accessible accommodation, accessible tourism, and concerns regarding safety and accessibility in the region
- Maintaining a presence on the Parksville Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Accomplishments:

- Strategic Planning - Special thanks to Dave Guyton and Ralph Tietjen for planning and leading us through the process. We tweaked our mission, etc., and identified our priorities for the next 5 years - see Next Steps).

Vision - To be an inclusive community which is accessible to all.

Mission - To enhance the lives of people with disabilities

Purpose – To advocate for the removal of barriers in our community.

Goal - To raise awareness and to provide education and resources.

- Transportation Master Plan – AOA continued monitoring and submitting to the process, always with a focus on accessibility.
- Accessible Accommodation Survey – Posted on both the AOA website and the Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association site.
- Snow Plowing Advocacy –
 - Commended the City on its pilot project regarding sidewalk plowing in the downtown.
 - Collaborated with the Parksville Downtown Business Association to request businesses with accessible parking spots to instruct plow operators not to plow snow into accessible parking spots.
- Election Activism –
 - Sent a list of questions to all Candidates in Provincial Election
 - Reported inaccessibility of certain polling stations to Elections BC

Next Steps:

- Commercial Accessibility (including accessible parking)–
This will be a major focus over the next 2-3 years, starting with downtown Parksville. We will try to standardize a process and establish partnerships with the Downtown Business Association and the Chamber of Commerce. Stay tuned for how you can assist and monitor our progress.
- Park and Trail Accessibility –
This will be a focus over the next 3-5 years. Of necessity, this is largely a fine weather activity. We will try to establish working relationships with various jurisdictions (municipal, regional, and provincial), as appropriate, to improve accessibility to our large network of parks and trails.

We are a small group, but we are effective. Increased membership would allow us to do even more, so please, invite others to join us in our quest - *Removing barriers for people with disabilities*. Thank you to all our members, liaisons, and partners!

Respectfully Submitted by Sandra Hobson, President.