

## For Immediate Release

# City of Richmond Commits to Gold Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™

## All new City-owned buildings in Richmond will be built for meaningful accessibility

**September 9, 2024, Traditional territory of the xʷməθkwəy' əm (Musqueam) First Nation / Richmond, B.C.**— Rick Hansen Foundation applauds the City of Richmond for its continued commitment to being a municipal leader in the advancement of accessibility following a decision passed at its July 22, 2024 City Council meeting. At this meeting Council made the decision that all future, newly constructed City-owned buildings, excluding heritage buildings and amenity contributions, will be rated through the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) program, targeting certification, and where possible, endeavour to achieve Gold certification.

RHFAC is a tool that measures the meaningful accessibility of buildings from a people-centric perspective of those with varying disabilities including mobility, hearing, and vision disabilities as well as individuals who are neurodiverse. Building owners and managers use the data to understand their accessibility and prioritize improvements over time. The program surpasses building code and addresses components outside of the scope of code entirely such as colour contrast, hearing loops, neurodiversity, and respite areas, thereby rewarding inclusion and innovation.

“The City of Richmond remains committed to making our community’s facilities more accessible and inclusive,” said Mayor Malcolm Brodie, City of Richmond. “By implementing the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification tool, along with the City’s existing enhanced accessibility design guidelines and technical specifications, Richmond will continue to be a leader in supporting accessibility standards for buildings that reduce barriers while encouraging access for everyone.”

“I’m incredibly pleased that the City of Richmond has joined the leadership of other BC based municipalities in this vital commitment to accessibility and inclusion. It’s even more meaningful that this is taking place in the city I have lived in for over three decades, where I have raised my family in and where my grandchildren know to be home,” said Rick Hansen, Founder Rick Hansen Foundation. “I am grateful to the City of Richmond for honouring an important legacy of my Man In Motion World Tour, to further the dream of a world without barriers. I hope other municipalities build on Richmond’s momentum and follow suit!”

Achieving RHF Accessibility Certification in new builds does not always require significant additional investment and costs can often be reduced through advanced planning and design. Thanks to funding from the Government of BC, City of Richmond staff are also taking RHFAC Professional Training as part of the BC Accessibility Grant program. This training will enable city staff to rate buildings internally, further contributing to a culture of inclusion.

“To have all new City-owned buildings in Richmond aiming for RHFAC Gold is exceptional news for residents and visitors living with disabilities,” said Doramy Ehling, CEO of the Rick Hansen Foundation. “With the majority of Canadians or 64% having a disability themselves or a family member they live with or take care of with a disability<sup>1</sup>, too many people continue to be excluded every day because of barriers. I encourage municipalities across Canada to follow Richmond’s leadership in creating meaningful access for people of all ages and abilities. A commitment to accessibility in policy leaves a legacy of inclusion that will echo for generations.”

An accessible built environment benefits everyone - people with temporary and permanent disabilities, our aging population, children, and parents with strollers. Making public spaces universally accessible unleashes our collective economic and social power creating communities across the nation we can all be proud of.

Richmond follows previous commitments to RHFAC by BC based municipalities including the City of Surrey, the City of Vancouver, and the City of Williams Lake. Over 1,925 sites across Canada have been rated to-date through the RHFAC program, including over 129 achieving RHFAC Gold. To learn more, visit [www.RickHansen.com/RHFAC](http://www.RickHansen.com/RHFAC).

**-30-**

### **About the Rick Hansen Foundation**

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988, following the completion of Rick Hansen’s Man In Motion World Tour. For over 35 years, RHF has worked to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. Visit [www.RickHansen.com](http://www.RickHansen.com) to learn more.

### **RHF Media Contact:**

Cynamon Schreinert, Hartley PR

[Cynamon@hartleypr.com](mailto:Cynamon@hartleypr.com)

604-802-2733

---

<sup>1</sup> National Accessibility Study, Leger, March 2024. <https://www.rickhansen.com/sites/default/files/2024-05/draft-report-rhf-42348001-march-15-2024-final-s.pdf>